PERSONAL REACTION
LINCOLN

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SLAVERY ATTITUDE

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Slavery

Attitudes about Slavery

Lincoln's Personal Reaction

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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71.2009.085 04697

Mr. Lincoln's Abolitionism.

When Mr. LINCOLN, refusing to express himself in regard to the crisis, referred the public to his past views, we took occasion to look back into his record, and we published quotations from his speeches and letters, not merely tinctured with Abolitionism, but black with its repulsive hue.

We quoted, availing ourselves of a condensed report of Mr. LINCOLN's record, prepared by the Nashville *Union & American*, the following, as from a speech made by Mr. LINCOLN in September, 1858:

(1) "That *central idea* in our political system at the beginning was, and until recently continued to be, the equality of men. And although it was always submitted patiently to, whatever inequality there seemed to be, as a matter of actual necessity, its constant working has been a steady progress toward the practical equality of all men.

(2.) "In what I have done, I cannot claim to have acted from any peculiar consideration of the colored people as a separate and distinct class in the community, but from the simple conviction that all the individuals of that class are members of the community, and in virtue of their manhood, entitled to every original right enjoyed by any other member. We feel, therefore, that all legal distinction between individuals of the same community, founded in any sueh circumstances as color, origin and the like, are hostile to the genius of our institutions, and incompatible with the true theory of American liberty. Slavery and oppression must cease or American liberty must perish.

In Massachusetts and in most, if not all the New England States, the colored man and the white are absolutely equal before the law.

In New York the colored man is restricted as to the right of suffrage by a property qualification. In other respects, the same equality prevails.

I embrace with pleasure this opportunity of declaring my disapprobation of that clause of the Consitution, which denies to aportion of the colored people the right of suffrage.

True Democracy makes no inquiry about the color of the skin or place of nativity, or any other similar circumstance of condition. I regard, therefore, the exclusion of the colored people as a body from the elective franchise as incompatible with the trne Democratic principle."

The New York *Times* pronounced this extract "a forgery," and showed by the date, and by a comparison with other speeches of Mr. LINCOLN, that the views in regard to Negro Equality of citizenship were not those of Mr. LINCOLN.

The speech referred to was made about September 16, 1856, at a banquet at Chicago, and is reported in the Illinois *Journal* of that date. The paragraph marked (1) belongs to that speech, and the remainder from (2) is the language of Gov. CHASE, of Ohio. In that speech LINCOLN went on to say, after what we have quoted above (1);

(3.) Let past differences as nothing be; and, with steady eye on the real issue, *let us reinaugarate the good old central ideas of the republic.* We can do it. The human heart is with us; God is with us. We shall again be able, not to declare that all the States, as States, are equal; nor yet that all the citizens, as citizens, are equal; but renew the broader, better declaration, including both these and much more, that all men are created equal.

In making the compilation of views, the journal from which we quoted had "run in" the opinions of CHASE, into those of LINCOLN.

In referring back to make this correction, however, we find that while Mr. LINCOLN denies the general and perfect equality of negroes (and the equality of whites and of States also,) he insists upon their equal right to liberty.

He himself makes this distinction. In his debate with DOUGLAS (p. 136) he said, at Charleston, Ill.:

"An elderly gentleman called upon me to know whether I was really in favor of a *perfect* equality between the negroes and white people.

He denies that he is. He would not give them equal suffrage, equal rights on juries, &c. He adds:

"I have never seen, to my knowledge, a man, woman, a child, who was in favor of producing a perfect equality, *social and political*, between negroes and white men."

At Alton Mr. LINCOLN said, speaking of the Declaration of Independence:

"I think the authors of that notable instrument intended to include *all men*, but they did not intend to declare all men equal *in all respect*. They did not mean to say that all men velopment or social equality. They defined were equal in size, color, intelectnal or moral dewith tolerable distinctness in what they did consider men equal—equal in certain inalienable rights, among which is life, LIBERTY and persuit of happiness."

In his Peoria speech, Oct. 16, 1854, we find this doctrine explained:

"What I do say is, that no man is good enough to govern another man without the other man's consent. I say this is the leading principle, the sheet anchor of American republicanism. Our Declaration of Independence says.

"'We hold these truths to be self evident--that all men are created free and equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just power from the consent of the governed.'

"I have quoted so much at this time merely to show that according to our ancient faith the powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed. Now, the relatiou of master and slave is *pro tanto*, a violation of this principle. The master not only governs the slave without his consent, but he governs him by a set of rules altogether different from those which he prescribes for himself. Allow all the governed an equal voice in the government; and that, and that only, is self-government."—*Howell's Life of Lincoln, page* 279.

And in his celebrated Chicago speech we have the following:

"I shonld like to know if, taking this old Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are equal upon principle, and making *exceptions* to it, *where will it stop? If one man says it does* NOT *mean a negro*, why not another say it does not mean some other man?"—[See Lincoln and Douglas Debates, p. 23—Lincoln's Edition.]

"If that declaration is not the truth, let us get the statute book *and tear it out!* [Cries of 'no no.'] Let us stick to it then; let us *stand firmly by it.*"—[Debates, page 23—Lincoln's Edition.]

"I believe that the entire records of the world from the date of the Declaration of Independence up to within three years ago, may be searched in vain for a single affirmation, *from one single man, that the negro was not included in the Declaration of Independence.*"—[Debates, Lincoln's Edition, page 178.]

When pushed by Judge Douglas as to his meaning when he declared that "it (slavery) should be placed where the public mind should rest in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction," he declared that

"I did not even say that I desired that slavery seould be put in course of ultimate extinction. I *do say so now*, however, so there need be no longer any difficulty about that. It may be written down in the great speech."

Again he says:

"I have always hated slavery, I think, as much as any abolitionist. I have been an old line Whig. I have always hated it; but I have always been quiet about it until this new era of the introduction of the Nebraska bill began. I always believed that everybody was against it, and that it was in course of ultimate extinction.

"We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented.—In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. '*A house divided against itself cannot stand.*' I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but *I do expect it will cease to be divided;* it will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, north as well as south."

Commenting on this, he afterwards said:

"If I were in Congress, and a vote should come up on a qucstion whether slavery should be prohibited in a new Territory, in spite of the Dred Scott decision I would vote that it shonld.

These quotations sufficiently indicate Mr. LINCOLN's position. He is not in favor of equal political and social rights to the negroes; but he believes that they are entitled to liberty by virtue of the Declaration of Independence, and he is pledged to an irrepressible conflict with the South, which is to end in the extinction of Slavery or the dissolution of the Union. Both, he says, cannot stand.

It is painful to us to look back thus for criminations against the President elect. But he refuses to speak; and appeals himself to the record. We would it were a better one. We would willingly forget it, if he would give us something else and better to refer to. Let him wipe out the past; disregard what in the heat of passion and controversy, he may have said heretofore; and, mindful only of his responsibilities in his new position, let him declare his consciousness of his duties, his responsibility to the whole people, his fidelity to the Constitution, his superiority to sectionalism, and his devotion to the Union of the States. One word of this kind, one act in accordance with it, would outweigh all his past life with all its boasted record.

Albany Argus
1/1/60

Lincoln's Hatred of Oppression.

To Newton Bateman, October, 1860: "I know there is a God, and that he hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that his hand is in it. If he has a place and work for me, and I think he has, I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God."

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1862.

THE PRESIDENT AND SLAVERY.

THE President has taken advantage of a rather impertinent and very injudicious letter addressed to him by Mr. Horace Greeley, to state to the public his position on the slavery question. We publish his letter in another column. While distinctly avowing his personal wish that "all men every where could be free," the President declares that his sole exclusive aim is to restore the Union, without reference to slavery; and that while he would not hesitate to proclaim emancipation if he were satisfied that that would restore the Union, neither would he scruple to save the Union with slavery. He thus takes issue on the one hand with the pro-slavery half-and-half Union men of the Border States who object to the restoration of the Union at the cost of their peculiar institution, and, on the other, with the fanatical ultraists of the North who object to the restoration of the Union unless slavery be destroyed.

In this position Mr. Lincoln will undoubtedly find himself supported by the bulk of the people of the country. What we all want, first, is to put down the rebellion. When that is done, we can deal with slavery and its antecedents as our necessities may dictate.

Nothing can be falser than to assume, as some of the followers of Mr. Wendell Phillips do, that if we restore the Union without destroying slavery, our work will be only half accomplished, and it will be left to another generation to complete it. Whatever be the issue of the war, slavery has already received a death-blow from which it can never recover. There is no State in the Union in which it can ever be again a thriving or even a safe institution. That iron despotism of the master class, and that rigid system of municipal law, which alone could render it safe for white men and women to inhabit vast plantations surrounded by negro slaves, have been utterly shattered by the events of the war. Even where the black has not had courage, or sense, or opportunity to escape to the Union lines, and claim the privilege of freedom offered him by our laws, he has been utterly demoralized, and rendered forever unfit to resume the patient toil of past years.

It is known, probably, to nine out of ten slaves in the South that every Slave State now contains a safe refuge whither fugitives can fly for emancipation, and where no overseer or blood-hound can follow them. That these fugitives thus far have come into our lines by hundreds instead of tens of thousands is mainly due to the fact that the entire white population of the South is armed, and all general movements of the negroes are at once repressed by wholesale massacres. But neither the rifle nor the stake can expel from the mind of the slave the knowledge that freedom is near him, and that he can obtain it when he chooses to make the effort; and with this thought in his brain, he is worse than valueless as property.

This great fact is ever present to Mr. Lincoln's mind. In conversation with a leading banker of this city, who is also a prominent member of the Republican Party, he lately observed that, in his opinion, it was "much wiser *to do a thing than to talk about it.*" Frémont and Hunter talked—in proclamations. The President, or rather the war—for he is merely the instrument of events—is "doing the thing:" sapping the foundation of slavery; rendering it unprofitable and unsafe; exploding one by one all the delusions which induced the people of the South to cling to it; and slowly but surely, without noisy proclamations or windy words, clearing the way for a general emancipation of all the slaves on this continent.

How and when these systematic and regular approaches may be succeeded by the final assault it is yet impossible to say. But the President has by his acts won an indisputable claim to confidence in his honesty, and all those among us who have no other aim in view than the good of the country will be content to leave the subject in his hands.

THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN.

THE President's remarks to the committee of colored men have now been carefully considered by all who understand the importance of the subject. That his scheme of colonization is impracticable and undesirable does not detract in the least from the honest good-will with which he urges it; and that a President of the United States should say to colored men that the treatment of their race in the country had been most unjust and iniquitous is something that three or four years ago was the most hopeless of all possibilities.

With the President the question, as with all sensible men, is a practical one. What is the best thing to do under the circumstances? is what he asks. His reply is that, in view of the strong distaste of the dominant race in this country to the other, it is better that the latter should withdraw and settle elsewhere.

That they are as much native here as most of us whites, whose fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors came from Europe—that they are an essential and immense part of the laboring force of the country—that they are a singularly inoffensive, mild, and amiable people—that they are fondly attached to the region in which they are born and leave it only because of the brutal slavery in which they are held—that they form a very insignificant proportional minority of all the criminal offenders in the land—that they are a cheerful, affectionate, flexible race—that their only offense is that we have injured them—that the prejudice against them is an idle, wanton, and wicked hatred, cherished among the most brutal and ignorant of our foreign population—by the most dangerous and unprincipled of political demagogues and newspapers—that the emigration of four millions of people in their condition is a practical impossibility, and if it were feasible, that it would be the most disastrous blow at the prosperity of the country at a time when it is least able to bear it—are all considerations of no weight in the President's mind, in view of the fact that a great many white people in the country don't like the colored people.

But such dislikes are a very common spectacle in history. The Jews were universally hated in the Christendom of the Middle Ages, and they were abominably treated. They are tolerated now, but they are still viewed with a peculiar prejudice, and in the European cities they occupy certain quarters which are half regarded as lazarettos. Until very recently Jews could not sit in the British Parliament. But is a grave recognition and fortification of this prejudice a sound state policy?

In old Britain the Normans, Danes, and Saxons did not love each other. But they did not go asunder and colonize. They remained and formed the English nation. The English to-day do not like the Scotch, and they hate the Irish. Is there any valid reason why black men should be enslaved or exiled by white men that would not equally justify enslaving and exiling the Celts by the Saxons? If we are to talk of troublesome and dangerous and impracticable races, what will our Celtic brethren say for themselves?

There is a bitter prejudice against the colored race in this country. That they should emigrate is out of the question. That they should be enslaved is henceforth impossible. They must remain. They must be elevated as fast as possible into good citizens. And how fast ignorance, degradation, and stupidity *can* be raised to what we call the level of citizenship the history of every year shows. The most brutal, besotted, wretched, superstitious European, who can neither read nor write, whose body and mind have hitherto starved in abject want, lands upon our shores, and in a very, very, very short time, he is found voting for Mayor of New York, and is held to be quite good citizen enough to help oppress the unfortunate colored natives of the country.

The prejudice against the colored race is one that we must overcome. To indulge it is to stab our fundamental doctrine to the heart. But if ignorance, brutality, and degradation in high places or low are to be held to condemn men to servility, let it be understood, and let it work equally. Let every man who falls within the category—American, Englishman, Irishman, Scotchman, Frenchman, German, Spaniard, Italian, Swede, Norwegian, Greek, Syrian, Asian, African, or Polynesian—take his chance.

The President's convictions and hopes are humane, and just, and noble. But his method is impracticable. It is simply a shirk, not a solution. The "Conservatives" who praise it do not share his feeling of the deep injustice of slavery, nor do they wish to remedy the wrong. They praise him because they think his policy separates him from his friends. They do not love him more: they only hate him less.

J WRIGHT

LINCOLN ON SLAVERY.

Fresh Reminiscences by Mr. Carpenter.

The Indianapolis *Journal* of April 16th, contains the following contributions from Mr. Carpenter, the artist:

"Mr. Chase told me that at the Cabinet meeting immediately after the battle of Antietam, and just prior to the issue of the September proclamation, the President entered upon the business before them by saying 'that the time for the announciation of the emancipation policy could be no longer delayed. Public sentiment,' he thought, 'would sustain it—many of his warmest friends and supporters demanded it—and he had promised his God that he would do it.' The last part of this was uttered in a low tone, and appeared to be heard by no one but Secretary Chase, who was sitting near him. He asked the President if he correctly understood him. Mr. Lincoln plied: 'I made a solemn vow before God that if General Lee was driven back from Pennsylvania, I would crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the slaves.'

"When informed that certain ministers in Springfield would not vote for him, he drew forth a pocket New Testament, and said: 'These men will know that I am for freedom in the Territories, freedom everywhere, as free as the Constitution and laws will permit, and that my opponents are for slavery. They know this; and yet, with this book in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live a moment, they are going to vote against me; I do not understand it at all.'

"Mr. Lincoln paused—paused for long minutes—his features surcharged with emotion. Then he rose and walked up and down the reception room in the effort to retain or regain his self-possession. Stopping at last, he said, with a trembling voice, and his cheek wet with tears: 'I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me—and I think he has—I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know that I am right, because I know that liberty is right; for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand; and Christ and reason say the same, and they will find it so. Douglas didn't care whether slavery was voted up or down, but God cares, and humanity cares, and I care, and with God's help I shall not fail. I may not see the end; but it will come, and I shall be vindicated; and these men will find that they have not used their Bibles right."

"Much of this was uttered as if he was speaking to himself, and with a sad, earnest solemnity of manner impossible to be described. After a pause, he resumed: "Does it not appear strange that men can ignore the moral aspect of this contest? A revelation could not make it plainer to me than that slavery or the government must be destroyed? The future would be something awful, as I look at it, but for this rock on which I stand (alluding to the New Testament which he still held in his hand), especially with a knowledge of how these ministers are going to vote. It seems as if God had borne with this thing (slavery) until the very teachers of religion had come to defend it from the Bible, and claim for it a divine character and sanction, and now the cup of iniquity is full and the vials of wrath will be poured out.'"

Lincoln's View of Slavery.

Century Magazine: Lincoln's view of slavery was, from the first, not unlike Washington's and that of other founders of the republic. His attitude was unyielding as to principle. He looked upon the institution as intrinsically evil; inimical to the interests of free labor; anomalous, and impossible of perpetuity, in a politically free community; something to be thwarted, diminished, and ultimately made to cease by just, constitutional and reasonable means. He satisfied the extremists on neither side of the great debate; for while he would never compromise as to principle, he was too profoundly the statesman to refuse to compromise as to details of time and method. 2.1.1905

ST. LOUIS GLOBE-DEMOCRAT

Douglas labored hard to prove that Lincoln and the Republican party were in favor of the abolition of slavery where it already existed, and the introduction of negro equality; but he did not profit much by that evasion of the main question. As a matter of fact, the Republicans of that time were not Abolitionists. They were opposed to any interference with slavery in the South. Their objections to the institution were economical rather than moral, and they simply resisted its extension in the interest of free labor and to save the public lands for white men who did not own slvaves. They were not distressed about the wrongs of the negroes, and not at all desirous to have them for fellow-citizens. The majority of them, perhaps, believed that slavery was a crime and a curse, but they were willing to tolerate it where it had been established, and let the South solve the problem in her own time and way. "I will say," Lincoln declared in one of the debates, "that I am not now, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races—that I am not now nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people." He went on to say that while the two races remained together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and that he was certainly in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race. "I do not understand," he exclaimed, "that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave, I must necessarily want her for a wife; my understanding is that I can just let her alone." 1858

I hold it to be a paramount duty of us in the free states, due to the union of the states, and perhaps to liberty itself (paradox though it may seem) to let the slavery of the other states alone; while on the other hand, I hold it to be equally clear that we should never knowingly lend ourselves, directly or indirectly, to prevent that slavery from dying a natural death—to find new places for it to live in when it can no longer exist in the old.—Letter to William Durley, Oct. 3, 1845.

—o— 1905

J WRIGHT

LINCOLN AND NEGRO SUFFRAGE.

Prof. Francis N. Thorpe, in an interesting article in the January issue of "Harper's Magazine," entitled "A Century's Struggle for the Franchise in America," intimates that Lincoln was the first statesman during the war days to advocate the extension of the suffrage to the negroes. This is a strange error, but it is not altogether original with Prof. Thorpe. There is no actual basis for any such assumption, yet it exists to some extent, nevertheless. Probably one reason for this notion is the fact that he was the author of the emancipation proclamation By the familiar process of association the man who "freed the negroes" is held also to have been the man who gave them the ballot.

There is a letter extant from Lincoln to Gov. Hahn, of Louisiana, written about thirteen months prior to Lincoln's death, which Prof. Thorpe, oddly enough, seems to think was the first suggestion of negro suffrage from any person high in authority in the government. It was dated March 13, 1864, and congratulated Hahn on having fixed his name in history as "the first free state Governor of Louisiana," and added: "Now you are about to have a convention which, among other things, will probably define the elective franchise. I barely suggest, for your private consideration, whether some of the colored people may not be let in, as, for instance, the very intelligent and those who fought gallantly in our ranks. They would probably help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty in the family of freedom. But this is only a suggestion, not to the public, but to you alone."

Suffrage on the lines here hinted at was widely different from that which came with the adoption of the reconstruction policy in 1867, and that which Sumner and Stevens advocated before the Hahn letter was written. Johnson, who, as President, followed Lincoln's ideas on the question of state restoration very closely, made a somewhat similar suggestion to Gov. Sharkey, of Mississippi, four months after Lincoln's death, or on August 15, 1865, in these words: "If you could extend the elective franchise to all persons of color who can read the Constitution of the United States in English and write their names, and to all persons of color who own real estate valued at not less than $250, and pay taxes thereon, you would completely disarm the adversary and set an example that other states will follow."

This was a moderate proposition, though not quite so moderate as Lincoln's, for Lincoln remarked to Hahn, but Johnson did not to Sharkey: "But this is only a suggestion, not to the public, but to you alone." The Johnson scheme did not "disarm the adversary"—the element, small as yet, but rapidly growing, which wanted unrestricted negro suffrage—nor would it have had this effect if it had been adopted by every one of the eleven seceded states. Full negro suffrage, or "impartial suffrage," had been part of the reconstruction plans of Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens from the beginning, and this policy was at last forced on Congress less than two years after Lincoln's death.

The theories of Stevens and Sumner regarding the relations of the seceded states to the rest of the Union differed radically from that held by Lincoln. Stevens contended that the measure of resistance offered to the Constitution in the seceded states suspended its operation in them, and that the National Government must decide when and by what means its operation was to be resumed. Sumner's theory was that, through secession and the resistance to the National Government in the seceded states which followed it, these states abdicated their functions and renounced their privileges under the Constitution—committed suicide, in fact—that thus slavery, which rested on state law, was abolished, and that Congress should take measures to establish this fact, to set up a republican form of government in the "vacated territory," and to protect all the inhabitants in those states in any way it should think proper. Both these theories were put forward early in the war—Stevens' in 1861 and Sumner's in 1862. In each of these theories Congress had the power to work its will in the seceded states, and the extension of the franchise to the negroes was part of the plan favored by each as a measure of protection to the negroes themselves and to the white Union men in these states. Neither plan was adopted in its entirety, but each had some influence in shaping the reconstruction scheme which was evolved by Congress in the fight with President Johnson, of which the acts of March 2 and 23, 1867, and the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments were the chief parts, and which gave the ballot to the negroes on the same terms as it was held by the whites.

Lincoln's theory of the relations of the seceded States to the loyal part of the country was diametrically opposed to the Stevens and Sumner ideas and to the plan adopted by Congress over President Johnson's veto. His opinion was that the States were never out of the Union, and that, as laid down in his proclamation of December 8, 1863, all which was necessary to restore them to their old positions was that, after armed resistance in them to the National Government ended, a certain proportion of their citizens, one-tenth being the ratio prescribed by him in this proclamation, should take the oath of allegiance and set up a loyal government. Amnesty at the same time was to be granted to all who served the Confederacy except a small specified number of its leaders. While in the Stevens and Sumner theory, and in that ultimately adopted in 1867, Congress had virtually everything to do in the business of state restoration, it would have, in the Lincoln plan, which Johnson attempted to carry out after Lincoln's death, scarcely anything to do in the matter, almost the entire work devolving on the Executive.

In Lincoln's theory the question of the suffrage was a matter which belonged to the states individually, and with which Congress had no right to interfere. This was shown in the proclamation of 1863, already mentioned, and in subsequent utterances, including the Hahn letter, before quoted. The proclamation offers pardon to all who will swear henceforth to support the Constitution of the United States, and sets forth that when those who happen to conform to this condition, each being a qualified voter by the election laws of the State existing immediately before the so-called act of secession, and excluding all others, shall re-establish a State Government which shall be republican, and in no wise contravening said oath, such shall be recognized as the true government of the state, etc.

Two facts in regard to negro suffrage are plain from the quotations of Lincoln's words in letters and proclamations here made—he did not favor indiscriminate negro suffrage, and he thought the whole question of the suffrage, whether extended or restricted, was a state concern purely, which neither Congress nor the Executive had any right to touch.

July 22, 1861, Congress adopted a resolution proposed by the veteran statesman, John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, who was in the Senate as early as 1817, and who now, over forty years later, was serving in the House of Representatives, which set forth that the war was being waged, not "in any spirit of oppression, or for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, or purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those states, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and all laws in pursuance thereof, and to preserve the Union, with all the dignity, equality and rights of the several states unimpaired; that as soon as these objects are accomplished, the war ought to cease."

Only two votes were cast against the resolution in the House, and only five in the Senate. Many of the members of Congress who voted for this resolution changed their ground later, but apparently Lincoln was governed until his death by the spirit of that deliverance. He believed that the states were never out of the Union, and that all which was needed to restore them to their old places was the overthrow of the insurgent forces and officials in them, and the replacement of a civil authority which would recognize the Constitution and the laws of Congress and obey them, leaving the question of suffrage, as before, to the states.

But this was not the view which prevailed. In a speech in favor of the bill passed early in 1867 granting the ballot to the negroes in the District of Columbia, Senator Sumner said: "Now, to my mind, nothing is clearer than the absolute necessity of suffrage for all colored persons in the disorganized states. It will not be enough if you give it to those who read and write. You will not in this way acquire the voting force which you need there for the protection of Unionists, whether white or black. You will not secure the new allies who are essential to the national cause."

That this view of the advisability of granting unrestricted suffrage to the negro was held then by persons usually considered to be less radical than Sumner can be clearly shown. James Russell Lowell, writing in 1865, and discussing the negro's status under the new conditions which emancipation brought, asks (Lowell's Prose Works, vol. v., pp. 228-30), "Will it be enough to make the freedmen landholders merely?" and adds: "Must we not make them voters also, that they may have that power of self-protection which no interference of government can so safely, cheaply and surely exercise in their behalf? We answer this question in the affirmative, for reasons both of expediency and justice. * * * As a matter of expediency it is always wisest to shape a system of policy with a view to permanence much more than to immediate convenience. * * * We must leave behind us no expectation and no fear of change to unsettle men's minds and dishearten their industry. Both the late master and the late slave should begin on the new order of things with a sense of its permanence on the one hand, and its rightfulness on the other. * * * Unless we make the black a citizen, we take away from the white the strongest inducement to educate and enlighten him. * * * Under the head of expediency comes also this other consideration—that unless made citizens the emancipated blacks, reckoned, as they must be, in the basis of representation, and yet without power to modify the character of the representatives chosen, will throw so much more power into the hands of men certain to turn it to their disadvantage, and only too probably to our own. * * * Have we endured and prosecuted this war for the sake of bringing back our old enemies to legislate for us, stronger than ever, with all the resentment and none of the instruction of defeat?"

But to this view, which involved the forcing of negro suffrage on the seceded States by act of Congress—for neither the fourteenth nor fifteenth amendment was yet adopted—Lincoln was opposed along to the day of his death. There is a widely prevailing opinion, shared probably by Prof. Thorpe, that Lincoln was a radical on the negro question. Possibly his "house-divided-against-itself" speech at the beginning or his senatorial canvass in 1858 is partly responsible for this impression. It sounds

as extreme as Seward's "irrepressible conflict" phrase in an address later in 1858, and almost as "advanced" as Seward's "higher law" doctrine, enunciated in 1850.

In reality, however, Lincoln was one of the most conservative of men on this, as on other, questions. In answer to Douglas' charge in Ottawa, Ill., in the canvass for the senatorship, that Lincoln was an abolitionist, Lincoln answered: "I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races. There is a physical difference between the two which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence —the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Lincoln's moderation is strikingly revealed in his letter in answer to Greeley's "Prayer of Twenty Millions of People" for emancipation, which appeared in the New York "Tribune" August 19, 1862, a month before the preliminary or monitory emancipation proclamation was issued. "My paramount object," said Lincoln in his letter, "is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it. And if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it. And if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that."

The emancipation proclamation, which is doubtless largely responsible for the notion held by many persons, of whom the "Harper's" writer seems to be one, that Lincoln was the author or earliest advocate of negro suffrage, was a military measure purely, intended to aid in the suppression of the rebellion by striking directly at slavery in the region in which the armies operated. Slavery as an institution, however, in the South at large, Lincoln felt could not be touched by executive edict, or by anything except an amendment to the Constitution. He made his opinion on this point plain to Senator Zachariah Chandler in 1864, when Chandler remonstrated with him for refusing to sign the Wade-Dawes reconstruction bill, which, among other provisions, proposed the abolition of slavery in the seceded states. Referring to this provision, Lincoln said: "This is the point on which I doubt the authority of Congress to act." "It is no more than you have done yourself," retorted the Senator, alluding to the emancipation proclamation. To this Lincoln answered: "I conceive that I may in an emergency do things on military grounds which can not be constitutionally done by Congress." For this reason he interested himself in the passage of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, which gave a legal sanction to emancipation and made it general throughout the country. On the suffrage question Lincoln was equally conservative. As shown by the Hahn letter, if negro suffrage came at all under his plan of state restoration it would be hedged in by an educational qualification. This, of course, would have given it to only a comparatively few persons at the outset, would have been unobjectionable to the masses of the Southern whites, and would have made the work of reconstruction easy and expeditious.

CHARLES M. HARVEY.

Globe-Democrat Jan 17 '97

Lincolns Moved to Avoid Slave Competition.

1806

ABRAHAM LINCOLN SR.'S widow removed farther westward, upon the death of her husband, says Binns' biography, into what is now the center of the state, and here her youngest son, Tom, early inured to labor, and without any of the advantages of education, became in due time a country carpenter. Round faced and compact in build, with gray eyes, a prominent nose, and coarse black hair, he grew to be a favorite among his neighbors for his kindly good nature, companionableness, and honesty. He seems to have been endowed with some of the best qualities of the pioneer, and to have possessed an obstinacy of purpose, a slow, sturdy determination, and personal rectitude, which have been too easily forgotten. He was probably of a lethargic temperament; there is a tradition that he was at times subject to fits of depression, and that at rare intervals, and under extreme provocation, he exhibited a certain violence of unrestrained passion. His choice of two noble women as his successive partners in life, indicates some corresponding quality of character. But he belonged to a class which could not thrive in the southern states, the class of free laborers and artisans. In the north he would doubtless have become, if not as prosperous as other men of equal skill and rectitude—for he seems to have had less than the average of ambition—yet free at least from actual poverty or dependence upon others. No man in his condition of life need, at that time, have remained really poor in the north. But in the south it was different. Slavery and independent labor could not prosper side by side, and as the gentry of Virginia brought their "property" into Kentucky, the descendants of the first hardy settlers either rose upon the new flood into affluence, were swept on before it farther west, or, if they remained, sank into insignificance and social ostracism as "crackers" or "poor white trash."

Opening Up the West.

During Thomas Lincoln's youth a great change came over the new land. He had been born in 1778, a year after his more successful contemporary, Henry Clay, whose name is so intimately associated with all the fortunes of Kentucky. Clay came over the mountains twenty years later, when the population of Kentucky already numbered nearly 200,000, one-fifth of whom were slaves. Almost immediately he became prosperous as an eloquent lawyer in courts whose principal business was the settlement of conflicting land claims. In those twenty years Kentucky had passed out of the hands of the pioneers. Other men with other manners were taking the places of the old frontier leaders with their coonskin caps, their tasseled shirts, their moccasins and fringed leggings, their long rifles, powder horns, and axes; their bold, free manners, their rough honesty and justice, and their vices of cruelty and dissipation. The trickster and land speculator had followed so fast upon their heels that they had often been unable to retain for themselves the lands they had won and cleared at so much peril. With these came also the lawyer and the judge, the surveyor, and the landed gentry. 1806

Rude Fare and Roaring Fun.

Much of the old social system disappeared with the passing of the frontiersman. But even when buffalo and redskin had become little more than legends, when the women of Kentucky were ceasing to treasure Indian scalps among their trophies, and the towns of Lexington and Louisville were centers of social and even literary interest, whisky drinking and boisterous merriment still ruled at all festivities, and personal prowess was the surest path to popularity.

A little before midsummer, 1806, this noisy, mirthmaking seems to have found full scope at the wedding of Thomas Lincoln and his first cousin, Nancy Hanks. The rude fare and roaring fun associated by tradition with this occasion, even if they could be transferred to this cold type and paper by the pen of a Rabelais, might only obscure the two figures whom we see but dimly in its midst—the young carpenter and his bride. From this distance she looks pathetically out of place at that noisy wedding feast, given by the well to do guardian of this the youngest member of a large and impoverished family of orphans.

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Chem Politics 2-6-1912

Lincoln's Fight Against Slavery.

On witnessing for the first time the slave auction, Lincoln said: "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing I will hit it hard." And to the men who said slavery was wrong but kept on voting the slave parties—Whig and Democrat—into power, he said:

"We want the men who think slavery wrong to quit voting with the men who think slavery right." And were Lincoln here today, he undoubtedly would say, "We want the men who think the liquor traffic wrong to quit voting with the men who think the liquor traffic right." For otherwise he would be false to his own lifelong teaching of righteous principles. He hated the liquor traffic as intensely as he hated slavery. We have his own words and his own actions to prove this. But to try to cast out slavery through a party controlled by slave-holders would have been as futile as the more modern effort of the non-partisan movement, to try to cast the liquor devil out through the parties which keep the liquor traffic entrenched in law. It would have been to play the fool in politics. Here Lincoln contended for a new party in power opposed to slavery as the only sane thing to do, and events have justified his course.

LINCOLN AND SLAVERY

FROM AN ARTICLE BY REV. A.S. WALLACE, EDITOR "UNITED PRESBYTERIAN" 1912

In 1846 he was elected to the Thirtieth Congress, but declined a re-nomination. He was offered, but declined, the governorship of the territory of Oregon. He appears to have despaired of the national deliverance from slavery for which he labored, and gave himself more closely to his profession, taking only such part in political movements as circumstances called him to.

Events were hastening to the great crisis in our national life. Two civilizations were contending for the mastery. By rapid strides slavery was gaining in power. By its masterful spirit it dominated Congress and the supreme court; and by its baleful influence it caused strife and bitterness on the one hand paralyzing the public conscience, and on the other arousing intense opposition as a stupendous wrong. The acquisition of new territory by the Mexican war and subsequent purchase, the settlement of the new territories by the North and by the South, the Kansas-Nebraska bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise which had been supposed to be a final settlement, the Dred Scott decision, the fugitive slave law, with marshalls overriding state laws and blood hounds tracking in free states the poor fugitives from bondage, "squatter sovereignity," "border ruffians," Free state settlers with Sharp's rifles making Kansas a bloody battle field, and the John Brown raid, made a period which it is now difficult to understand. Religious fervor combined with political bitterness. Churches were divided; families were separated; even states were arrayed against each other. The whole country was ablaze and from the Eastern shore to the most remote settlement, there was intense and increasing excitement. Whatever the political measure discussed slavery was the one controlling issue.

In this period Lincoln came into his greatness. The sense of the wrongfulness of slavery was grounded in his very nature. His conscience rebelled against it and his human sympathy stirred his soul to its depths. The sight of a dozen slaves shackled together with irons on a river steamer became a torment to him. Many years after he said "I see something like it every time I see the Ohio or any other slave border." In the legislature, supported by only one member he entered his protest against certain pro-slavery resolutions. In all his campaign speeches he avowed his convictions. When in Congress he voted for the Wilmot Proviso, and introduced a bill prohibiting the buying and selling of slaves in the District of Columbia and placing certain restrictions on the holding of slaves in the district. In 1856 the Republican party in Illinois was formed and he gave himself to it with his whole heart. His speech at the Bloomington Convention is rated as one of his best. He heard the sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees, and felt the thrill of the call to duty. He was not disobedient, and in the Fremont and Freedom campaign made many speeches. Already he had met the "little giant" Stephen A. Douglas, on the platform and showed himself one to be taken account of. In 1858 he was nominated for the United States Senate against Mr. Douglas, and in the convention which nominated him opened the campaign with the memorable declaration, which, as Carl Schurz says, "sounded like a shout from the watch tower of history:" "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the co. of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the states—old as well as new, North as well as South." It was the declaration of a philosopher, rather I might say of a prophet, who felt the inspiration of God. It was a radical position, at that time, but he refused to qualify it in the least. "It is true," he said, "and I would rather be defeated with these expressions in my speech than be victorious without them." It became the watchword of the campaign just as Seward's later brief expression, "the irrepressible, conflict" came into general use.

I do not need to speak of the campaign that followed with its memorable spectacular Douglas-Lincoln debates. Immense throngs gathered to hear these men of might discuss the issues on the sam platform. After more than half a century, traditions of the speakers and the scenes are cherished in the communities in which the meetings were held. The whole country was thrilled. The political contest was lifted to a higher moral plane. The Republicans of the East hailed the man who had proved himself worthy to be the leader of the anti-slavery hosts of the West. Douglass was elected, but Lincoln won in the debates, for he did not speak for himself but for the rights of man and for the limitation and ultimate destruction of the power that was crushing the life out of freedom. Douglas entered the Senate; Lincoln, the White House.

J WRIGHT

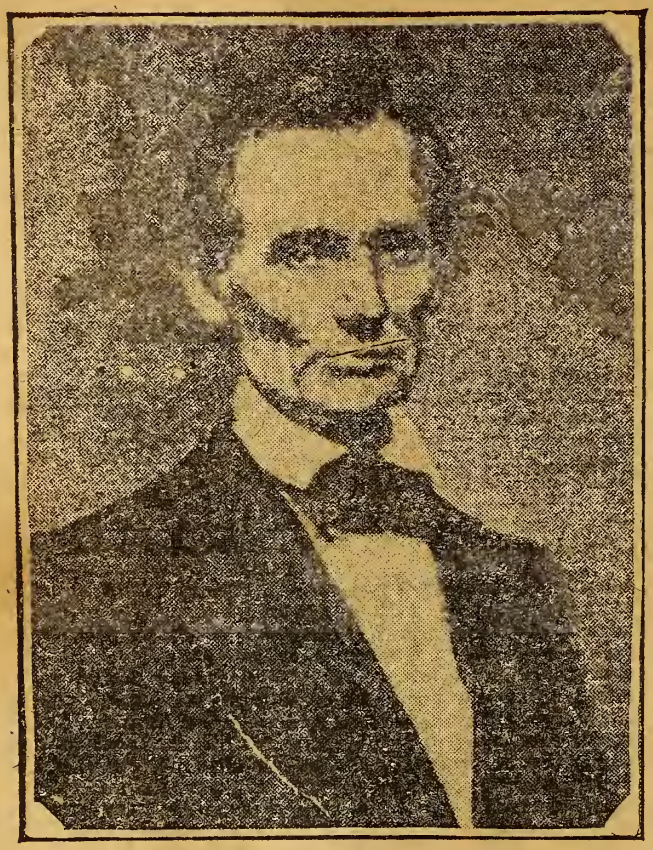
Five Minutes a Day With Our Presidents

SECOND ARTICLE

1520

By JAMES MORGAN

XLV.—AWAKENED TO HIS LIFE MISSION



ABRAHAM LIN COLN IN 1850.

THE iron-throated cannon of the Washington navy yard, breaking the stillness of a March dawn in 1854 with its one hundred exultant roars over the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, awakened Lincoln to the great mission for which his whole life had been an unconscious preparation. After a single term in congress, where his criticism of the Mexican war in the midst of that conflict had left him unavailable for a second term, and after providentially failing to obtain the snug berth of commissioner of the general land office, he had retired to his dingy law office in Springfield.

The wiping out of the dead line against the spread of slavery aroused him from his indifference to political questions and drew him from his retirement. "I know there is a God and that He hates injustice and slavery," he said simply to a friend. "I see the storm coming. I know His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me—and I think He has, I believe I am ready."

The cannon that called Lincoln to his duty also was the signal gun that heralded the birth of the republican party. Joining the new party, he became at once its leader in Illinois; to his own surprise, the second man in the balloting for its candidate for vice president in 1856, and its candidate for senator in 1858 against Stephen A. Douglas, the author of the repeal.

While Lincoln made ready for that campaign, as always in every hour of decision, he retired within himself. He consulted no one and gave no hint of his line of attack until he called together a dozen friends and read to them his opening speech, which began with those immortal words: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free * * * It will become all one thing or all the other."

Every man in the little group warned him that if he delivered the speech it would defeat him for the senate. "If I had to draw a pen across my record and erase my whole life from sight," he quietly replied, "and I had one poor gift or choice left as to what I should save from that wreck, I should choose that speech and leave it to the world unerased."

The Lincoln-Douglas debate is the old story over again of David and Goliath. Altho physically Lincoln towered above the "Little Giant," who was hardly five feet, four, Douglas had all but forgotten the country lawyer that he had left so far behind in his swift climb up the steps of fame, and the brilliant senator patronizingly dismissed his antagonist now as a "kind-hearted, amiable gentleman, a right good fellow, etc., etc."

Lincoln modestly admitted that he had been a "flat failure" in the race of ambition on which the two men had started in Springfield twenty years before. "I affect no contempt," he added, "for the high eminence he has reached. So reached that the oppressed of my species might have shared with me the elevation I would rather stand on that eminence than wear the richest crown that ever pressed a monarch's brow."
ein'leftd'bofta,r

Lincoln was transfigured by the great issue that had taken possession of him. Forgetting in his earnestness stage manners and platform tricks, his gestures were as simple as the words that he spoke in his high tenor voice, which sometimes ran almost into a piping falsetto or again softened into music.

Douglas carried a few more Legislative districts and was re-elected, but Lincoln led in the aggregate popular vote. As the defeated candidate was going home in the rainy election night he caught himself as he was about to lose his footing and, in his superstitious vein, he drew from the incident an omen: "It is a slip and not a fall."

Lincoln had met his Bunker Hill. The great unknown, who had dared to cross swords with the foremost champion of the repeal, piqued the curiosity of the country. Accepting an invitation to speak in New York, his Cooper Union address established his intellectual and moral right to lead the Nation.

Nevertheless, when zealous neighbors had first entered him as a candidate for President, he protested that he was not fit for the place. Until the convention of 1860 actually met in Chicago, his name seldom was mentioned for the honor outside his own State. Two-thirds of the delegates really favored the nomination of William H. Seward, but, as so often happens in politics, the very pre-eminence of the New York Senator made him unavailable. In the end Lincoln was nominated largely because he was the least known man on the list of candidates.

As they reluctantly turned from Seward to cast their ballots for Lincoln, some of the delegates actually shed tears for the great man that had fallen. Few dreamed that a greater man had risen.

J WRIGHT

Lincoln

AND SLAVERY

BY SIMEON D. FESS, OHIO
REP. 1921

THIS is the time of year when the country reverts to the significance of Lincoln's influence. Whatever be his monuments in accomplishment as the preserver of the American Union and the great emancipator, he has an enduring fame through his deathless utterances delivered from time to time. These utterances clearly pointed the course of history in a momentous era and merely became an index of the progress of our national growth from a slaveocracy defended as a loose confederation of states to an indissoluble union of indestructible states.

In 1858 when he was 49 years of age and known locally as a local political figure, he outlined the issue upon the most sensitive question which within a dozen years was to divide churches, destroy political parties, and threaten the overturn of the government in the greatest civil war known to history.

"A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free."

When his friends urged him against this "d——d fool utterance," and wanted to know "what in God's name could induce you to promulgate such an opinion," his reply was: "Upon my soul I think it is true." To those who condemned him he replied: "Friends, this thing has been retarded long enough. The time has come when these sentiments should be uttered. And if it is decreed that I must go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked with the truth. Let me die in the advocacy of what is just and right."

* * * * *

The same year he pressed Douglas to answer the following question:

"Can the people of a territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution?"

When he was warned by his friends that unless he desisted from his demand for an answer, he could never defeat Douglas for the Senate, he replied:

"I shall demand an aswer. If ever Douglas answers me, either yes or no, he can never be elected President of the United States. I am after larger game. The battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this."

* * * * *

In New York in February, 1860, at Cooper Union he made his greatest long speech. Here he set out the issue as it had never yet been stated by any other man.

"If it (slavery) is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality—its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension—its enlargement. All they ask we can readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right, as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition as being right; but thinking it wrong, as we do, can we yield to them?"

Of this speech Choate said:

"His eye kindled, his voice rang, his face shone and seemed to light up the whole assembly. * * * It was marvelous to see how this untutored man, by mere self-discipline had found his way to the grandeur and strength of absolute simplicity."

It was here where an auditor at the close of the address declared: "Lincoln is the greatest man that has appeared since St. Paul." To his enemies who charged him with favoring social equality, he said:

"I protest against the counterfeit logic which says that since I do not want a negro woman for my slave, I must necessarily want her for my wife."

Upon the question whether the nation could safely deal with slavery, he said:

"It has long been a question whether any government which is not too strong for the liberties of the people can be strong enough to maintain itself."

His faith in the nation as sufficient to perpetuate its liberties was well expressed at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, February 22, 1861:

"I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence."

He then raised the question why the states had been held together so long, and declared that it was the "sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time, * * * that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men and all should have an equal chance." He then declared he would rather be assassinated than to surrender that principle.

He was soon to assume supreme authority and he seemed to realize the test which was soon to be made, because he made it known that the laws of the government must be respected and they would be enforced.

"The Constitution will be preserved and defended until it is enforced and obeyed in every part of every one of the United States. It must be so respected, obeyed and enforced and defended, let the grass grow where it may."

* * * * *

His views on secession were no less clear than his purpose was determined: "We won't break up the Union, and you shant," was his dictum.

Upon taking the oath as President he said on this point:

"I hold that, in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these states is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our national Constitution, and the Union will endure forever—it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself."

And again:

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect and defend it.' I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection."

* * * * *

Henceforth the conduct of the leaders of rebellion compelled the chief stress to be placed upon the preservation of the Union rather than protection against the spread of slavery. To Greeley who had caustically criticized him as an opportunist because he did not free the slaves he wrote in August 22, 1862, just one month before his preliminary emancipation proclamation was announced:

"My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union. If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would do that. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more helps the cause. I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views."

In the struggle for the life of the Union, emancipation had to be decreed which was done to become effective January 1, 1863. Referring to the cause he said:

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate for the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise to the occasion."

Soon after on the field of Gettysburg Lincoln delivered what is styled the "finest

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short speech in the English language"—the famous "Gettysburg Address."

* * * * *

The high water mark of Lincoln's utterance is found in his second inaugural address. I quote that part of it which is properly styled a prose poem:

"Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

The Slavery Problem

His Connecticut Speech Pattern of Several Delivered in New England in 1860, Reared Monumental Moral Issue

When Abraham Lincoln, all unwittingly, was grooming himself for the Presidency, he delivered several speeches in New Hampshire and Connecticut. None of the former were preserved, but a striking similarity in fragments of the Connecticut speeches makes it seem probable that these extracts from his address at New Haven, March 6, 1860, were the basis of all his New England platform arguments.
—Ed.

I think that one of the causes of the repeated failures (to settle the slavery issue) is that our best and greatest men have greatly underestimated the size of this question. They have constantly brought forward small cures for great sores—plasters too small to cover the wound. That is one reason that all settlements have proved so temporary, so evanescent.

Look at the magnitude of this subject. One-sixth of our population, in round numbers. . . . , are slaves. The owners of these slaves consider them property. The effect upon the minds of the owners is that of property, and nothing else; it induces them to insist upon all that will favorably affect its value as property, to demand laws and institutions and a public policy that shall increase and secure its value, and make it durable, lasting and universal. The effect upon the minds of the owners is to persuade them that there is no wrong in it.

The slaveholder does not like to be considered a mean fellow for holding that species of property and hence he has to struggle within himself and sets about arguing himself into the belief that slavery is right.

Whether the owners of this species of property do really see it as it is, it is not for me to say; but if they do, they see it as it is through two billion of dollars, and that is a pretty thick coating. Certain it is that they do not see it as we see it. Certain it is that this two thousand million of dollars invested in this species of property is all so concentrated that the mind can grasp it at once. This immense pecuniary interest has its influence upon their minds.

★ ★ ★

But here in Connecticut and at the North slavery does not exist and we see it through no such medium. To us it appears natural to think that slaves are human beings; men, not property; that some of the things, at least, stated about men in the Declaration of Independence apply to them as well as to us. I say we think, most of us, that this charter of freedom applies to the slave as well as to ourselves; that the class of arguments put forward to batter down that idea are also calculated to break down the very idea of free Government, even for white men, and to undermine the very foundation of free society.

We think slavery a great moral wrong and while we do not claim the right to touch it where it exists, we wish to treat it as wrong in the territories where our votes will reach it. . . .

Now these two ideas—the property idea that slavery is right and the moral idea that it is wrong—come into collision and do actually produce that irrepressible conflict which Mr Seward has been so roundly abused for mentioning. The two ideas conflict and must forever conflict.

★ ★ ★

Again in its political aspect does anything in any way endanger the perpetuity of this Union but that single thing—slavery? Many of our adversaries are anxious to claim that they are specially devoted to the Union and take pains to charge upon us hostility to the Union. Now we claim that we are the only true Union men, and we put to them this one proposition: What ever endangered this Union save and except slavery? Did any other thing ever cause a moment's fear? . . . All men must agree that this thing alone has ever endangered the perpetuity of the Union.

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When this question shall be settled, it must be settled on some philosophical basis. No policy that does not rest upon philosophical public opinion can be permanently maintained. And hence there are but two policies in regard to slavery that can be at all maintained.

The first, based on the property view that slavery is right, conforms to that idea throughout and demands that we shall do everything for it, that we ought to do if it were right. We must sweep away all opposition, for opposition to the right is wrong; we must agree that slavery is right and we must adopt the idea that property has persuaded the owner to believe that slavery is morally right and socially elevating. This gives a philosophical basis for a permanent policy of enslavement.

The other policy is one that squares with the idea that slavery is wrong, and it consists in doing everything we ought to do if it is wrong. Now I don't wish to be misunderstood, nor to leave a gap down to be misrepresented even. I don't mean that we ought to attack it where it exists. To me it seems that if we were to form a Government anew, in view of the actual presence of slavery we should find it necessary to frame just such a Government as our fathers did; giving the slaveholder the entire control where the system was established, while we possess the power to restrain it from going outside those limits. From the necessities of the case we should be compelled to form just such a Government as our blessed fathers gave us; and surely if they have so made it that adds another reason why we should let slavery alone where it exists.

★ ★ ★

Now I have spoken of a policy based on the idea that slavery is wrong, and a policy based upon the idea that it is right. But an effort has been made for a policy that shall treat it as neither right nor wrong. It is based on utter indifference. . . . This policy chiefly stands in the way of a permanent settlement of the question. I believe there is no danger of its becoming the permanent policy of the country for it is based on a public indifference. There is nobody that "don't care." All the people do care, one way or the other.

★ ★ ★

When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition. I am not ashamed to confess that 25 years ago I was a hired laborer, mauling rails, at work on a flatboat—just what might happen to any poor man's son. I want every man to have the chance—and I believe a black man is entitled to it—in which he can better his condition, when he may look forward to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterward, and finally hire men to work for him. That is the true system.

Up here in New England you have a soil that scarcely sprouts black-eyed beans, and yet where will you find wealthy men so wealthy and poverty so rarely in the extremity? There is not another such place on earth! I desire that if you get too thick here and find it hard to better your condition on this soil, you may have a chance to strike and go somewhere else, where you may not be degraded, nor have your family corrupted by forced rivalry with negro slaves. I want you to have a clean bed and no snakes in it! Then you can better your condition and so it may go on and on in one ceaseless round so long as man exists on the face of the earth.

2/12/26

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NEW YORK

NEW YORK CITY SUN
FEBRUARY 12, 1931

is not probable that they will be able to do anything that will lessen distribution costs. WHIDDEN GRAHAM.
New York, February 11.

Why Lincoln Was Interested in the Cause of the Negro.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Lincoln was no friend to colored people in particular; he was a friend to justice and freedom, devotee of fair play.

He was not always right on the "race question," but he was always ready to get right. The greatest bequest we have received from his position is his willingness to learn and change his mind. He was willing to acknowledge that he was wrong yesterday, which was only another way of asserting that he had become wiser since yesterday. He said many of the things attributed to him against human equality and universal liberty, but he said them before he knew better, and never repeated them after he had learned better. In that lay his superiority to most men. He did not cling to a false position simply because he had assumed it once. He could grow.

If he were alive today he would be in the movements that aim to remove oppression. He would oppose disfranchisement, caste segregation and lynching. He would be interested in the cause of black men because they are men, not because they are black.

WILLIAM PICKENS,
Field Secretary, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
New York, February 11.

WARREN, LOUIS A.

The SLAVERY ATMOSPHERE of LINCOLN'S YOUTH

Lincolniana Publishers
Fort Wayne, Indiana

The Slavery Atmosphere of Lincoln's Youth

By

LOUIS A. WARREN

Director

LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE FOUNDATION

(First Edition)

Lincolniana Publishers
FORT WAYNE INDIANA
1933

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The Slavery Atmosphere of Lincoln's Youth*

By
LOUIS A. WARREN

The Proclamation of Emancipation was one of the most far-reaching state papers ever issued. It not only liberated immediately four million black men held in bondage, but it sounded a new and significant note in democratic government. The seventieth anniversary of the proclamation, which occurred on January 1, 1933, has invited further study of this writing and the factors which prompted it.

This proclamation, issued as a military necessity, was not the result of consultation and deliberation by a special commission or the reaction of the president's cabinet. It was the creation of Abraham Lincoln, himself, and he advised his cabinet he wished to bear the entire responsibility for introducing so drastic a measure. Carpenter, the artist, gives this version of the story in Lincoln's own words: "Without consultation with or the knowledge of the cabinet, I prepared the original draft of the proclamation . . . I said to the cabinet that I had resolved upon this step and had not called them together to ask their advice, but to lay the subject matter before them."[1] No document ever issued carried with it more of the signer himself than this guarantee of freedom for all men. The peculiar personal aspect of this writing invites a study of the factors which contributed to the development of a consciousness which found expression in the emancipation of the negro race.

Lincoln's viewpoint about the moral aspect of slavery has been considerably warped by the false assumptions drawn from his statements in the famous open letter to Horace Greeley. This letter had but one purpose, and that was the assuring of the people that, as president of the United States, his paramount objective was to save the Union at any cost. His references to freeing none, some, or all the negroes he indicates clearly would become his official duty, if, in carrying out any of these three proposals, the Union could be saved.

That Lincoln foresaw this letter might be open to a wrong interpretation of his own personal desire with respect to slavery, is indicated by the closing paragraph of the message to Greeley, which says:

"I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

It is clear that in the Emancipation Proclamation Lincoln not only performed his "official duty" by freeing all the slaves, but this act also happened to coincide with his "oft-expressed personal wish."

In a letter written in 1854 he said: "I suppose my opposition to the principle of slavery is as strong as any member of the Republican party."[2] In the famous Peoria speech of the same year he remarked with reference

*Paper read before the annual Lincoln's Birthday Assembly of the Chicago Historical Society on February 12, 1933.

1. Carpenter, Six Months in the White House, p. 4.
2. Letter to Codding, November 27, 1854.

to slavery: "I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself." In Chicago on July 10, 1858, he said: "I have always hated slavery, I think, as much as any abolitionist."

This Chicago utterance, which specifically states that Lincoln had "always hated slavery," should encourage us to investigate conditions existing in the community where the emancipator himself received his first impressions of the system. There may be those who are in agreement with the admonition sounded by Nicolay and Hay in their monumental work which concludes:

"There have been several ingenious attempts to show the origin and occasion of Mr. Lincoln's anti-slavery convictions. They seem to us an idle waste of labor. These sentiments came with the first awakening of his mind and conscience, and were roused into active life and energy by the sight of fellow-creatures in chains on an Ohio River steamboat, and on a wharf at New Orleans."[3]

Inasmuch as this inquiry attempts to go back to a date long before the birth of Lincoln, it may also be looked upon as an "idle waste of labor." While Nicolay and Hay were correct in stating that Lincoln's anti-slavery sentiments came "with the first awakening of his mind and conscience," it appears from evidence now available that these sentiments were aroused much earlier than has been believed.

Three years before his visit in 1840 to Joshua Speed of Kentucky, when he saw the slaves in chains, mentioned by Nicolay and Hay, he had joined with Dan Stone in a protest which he signed and laid before the Legislature of Illinois. One paragraph in the memorandum, written in the third person, follows: "They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy."

Lincoln's observations of the slave markets in New Orleans also occurred much earlier than Nicolay and Hay have concluded. On January 9, 1860, Lincoln wrote a letter to Alexander Stevens, in which he said, "When a boy I went to New Orleans on a flat boat and there I saw slavery and slave markets as I have never seen them in Kentucky, and I heard worse of the Red River plantations."

It is the contents of a letter which Abraham Lincoln wrote to A. G. Hodges of Frankfort, Kentucky, on April 4, 1864, which justify the assumption that Lincoln's opinions about slavery were formulated very early in life and became a dominant force in his development. He wrote: "I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel."

This written testimonial warrants at least three definite conclusions: First, if Lincoln was anti-slavery by nature, his parents were of that persuasion; second, if from his first recollection he had thought slavery wrong, some influences, surrounding him very early in life, must have continued to cultivate this opinion; third, if he concluded in his early life that nothing could be wrong if slavery was not, he must have always considered it a great moral menace. These three propositions so clearly set forth in this letter will invite our consideration under the following

3. Nicolay and Hay, Abraham Lincoln, a History, Vol. 1, p. 74.

captions: The attitude of Lincoln's parents towards slavery, Lincoln's childhood contact with slavery, and Lincoln's reaction towards the moral issue of slavery.

I. THE ATTITUDE OF LINCON'S PARENTS TOWARDS SLAVERY

The primary source of influence in a child's life may be found in the environment created by his parents and the opinions expressed by those who live in the same home with him. This fact makes it quite necessary to study the attitude of Lincoln's parents toward slavery.

The Hodges letter, which affirms the anti-slavery stand of his parents, is confirmed further by another statement which Lincoln prepared for Scripps in 1860. With reference to the migration of the Lincoln family from Kentucky to Indiana in 1816, when Abraham was but eight years of age, he wrote, "This removal was partly on account of slavery."

Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln, came from Virginia to Kentucky in 1782, when he was six years of age. Four years later Thomas Lincoln's father was massacred by the Indians at a point near Louisville, Kentucky, in Jefferson County. Two exhibits discovered in the Jefferson County Court House, bearing dates about the same time as the pioneer's massacre, will suggest the divergence of opinion about slavery then being registered in the very community where Thomas Lincoln was living when a boy.

A negro slave named Tom, property of Robert Daniel, was arrested and tried for felony. The testimony revealed that he had stolen two and three-quarters yards of cambric and some ribbon and thread, the property of Mary Patten. The court did "sentence the said negro, Tom, by reason thereof to be taken back to the jail of said county and from thence to the place of execution, and then be hung by the neck until he be dead, dead, dead."[4]

This severe punishment for so trivial an offense finds its counterpart in a document bearing a date one year later. It reveals the attitude towards slavery of many pioneers who had taken up their residence in the western country. This document, signed by Philip Graham, follows:

"Being conscious to myself that the practice of holding slaves in perpetual slavery is repugnant to the Golden Law of God and the unalienable rights of mankind as well as the very principle of the late glory of our revolution, which has taken place in America wherefore for these good and just causes, after weighty consideration the said Philip Graham do for myself and heirs and administrators and every one of them, emancipate, set free, and discharge all my negroes hereafter mentioned . . . "[5]

It may be said without fear of contradiction that the principles which inspired the revolution eventually brought on the irrepressible conflict. For fully seventy-five years before the open hostilities of 1861, differences of opinion caused men to clash about the political and moral issues

4. Jefferson County Court Order Book No. 2, p. 32.
5. Jefferson County Court Power of Attorney Register, p. 243.

involved in slavery. The Ordinance of 1784, introduced by Thomas Jefferson, which looked forward to the freedom of slaves; and the Ordinance of 1787, which advocated the non-extension of slavery, were hotly and bitterly contested. Thomas Lincoln, born in 1776, literally grew up with the slavery controversy in America.

Both of the parents of the president must have seen much of slavery in Washington County, Kentucky, where they were living before their marriage. Richard Berry, Sr., with whom Nancy Hanks made her home, listed three slaves in 1797. After his death it appears that his son, Edward, directed the affairs of the estate, and tradition claims that Nancy continued to live with the widow Berry and her son, Edward. In 1806, the year Nancy Hanks was married, Edward listed five slaves for taxation.[6]

Thomas Lincoln's brother, Mordecai, acquired a slave in 1803, about the time Thomas left Washington County. We have this testimony of President Lincoln with reference to his father, "before he was grown he passed a year as a hired hand with his Uncle Isaac, on Watauga, a branch of the Holston River."[7] It is likely that here Thomas Lincoln got his first close contact with the slavery system as it existed in the more Southern states. It is not known just how many slaves were owned by Isaac Lincoln at the time Thomas Lincoln was there, but when Isaac's widow died in 1834, forty-three slaves were listed in the inventory of her estate. Another Thomas Lincoln, for whom the president's father was named, and a brother of Isaac, was also a slave holder, having as many as six black men in his possession at one time. There is no dependable evidence that the father of Thomas Lincoln was an owner of slaves, and the inventory of his estate does not list any.

While it must be recognized from the data available that most of the slaves in Kentucky had good homes, it was always the exceptional case which would be remembered longest and cause the most comment adverse to slavery. An incident occurred in the community where both Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were living at the time, the details of which must have been known to them.

A certain man had leased a slave to a neighbor who, during the period he was in possession of the leasee, brutually beat him. The owner of the slave brought suit for damages against the man who hired the negro for so mutilating the slave as to greatly reduce the market value of his property. Many witnesses were called to testify to the severity of the whipping resulting from the slave having in his possession "A ball of soap" which it was alleged he had stolen. The evidence revealed, however, that the soap had been given to the slave by the wife of the man who administered the beating.

One who reads the testimony in this case will not question the terrible brutuality with which the slave was handled, nor can one fail to observe that the beating was administered for a supposed trivial offense which after all the negro did not commit. The moral phase of the whole

6. Washington County Tax List, 1806.
7. Autobiography prepared for Scripps.

proceeding, however, seems to have been given no consideration whatever. The only question involved was whether the slave, as a piece of property, had been damaged. The testimony of one witness very clearly illustrates the trend of the evidence:

Question by defendant—"What did you say when you saw the negro's back?"

Answer by deponent—"I said that I would not have had him scarred so for fifty pounds if he was my negro—no, not for one hundred pounds, though I did not consider that the negro was that much damaged."[8]

While Thomas Lincoln was living at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, in 1797, he may have come in contact with slavery in such a way that some very adverse impressions of the institution were registered in his mind. He was hired to help dig the raceway for a mill and was thrown in constant contact with slave labor employed for the same purpose. When pay day arrived and Thomas Lincoln received his wages he could not but have observed that the master from whom the slaves had been hired received the slaves' wages rather than the laborers themselves.[9]

As Thomas Lincoln had just reached the age of twenty-one at this time, which gave him some liberties of his own, surely, he must have been impressed by this system which prevented a certain class of men from profiting by their own labor. This injustice to the slaves paved the way for what later became known as the "Hired Time" system which was one of the most repulsive arrangements of all the contacts between master and slave.

Having made some very brief observations of incidents which may have influenced, more or less, the opinion of Lincoln's parents with respect to slavery during their younger days, we come to a more important consideration, namely: The actual home environment into which Abraham Lincoln came at birth. This approach will invite us to observe both the home and the community atmosphere in which Lincoln's parents moved at this time. The peculiar environment of the community in which the Lincoln cabin home stood was being created long before Abraham Lincoln was born. One must go back to the first religious organizations in the Lincoln neighborhood to learn the minds of the people who settled there.

When Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married in Washington County in 1806, they went immediately to Elizabethtown, in Hardin County, Kentucky, where Thomas Lincoln was employed. Two years later they moved twelve miles east to the farm where Abraham Lincoln was born. Before leaving Kentucky, they lived in another home about six miles north of the birthplace cabin. These residences were all in the same part of old Hardin County.

There was no community in America, west of the Alleghany mountains, where a more bitter and consistent controversy had been waged over the slavery question, during the first forty years of the nation's existence, than within the small area comprising a radius of fifteen miles from the home site where the birth of Abraham Lincoln took place, and within which area the three Lincoln homes were located. While this

8. Washington County Circuit Court, Bundle "W", 1796.
9. Lincoln National Life Foundation, Haycraft Account Book, 1797.

affirmation may appear to be an exaggeration, records still extant and testimonies of unbiased witnesses will combine to bear out this well-authenticated assertion.

This community not only had been saturated with slavery arguments, pro and con, for twenty-five years before Abraham Lincoln's nativity, but, on the very date of his birth, the church within two miles of where he was born was in the midst of one of the most prolonged disturbances which had occurred in the congregation over the subject of slavery.

According to Spencer, the Baptist historian, "Slavery was by far the most fruitful of mischief of all the questions that agitated the Baptist churches of Kentucky from 1788 until 1820."[10] One will observe that these dates cover the period in which Abraham Lincoln's father lived in Kentucky and the years of Abraham's own childhood.

The Baptists were the first religious body to establish themselves in the Kentucky country. By 1786, when Pioneer Abraham Lincoln died, they had twenty-five preachers in the field. Although there were clergymen representing other bodies scattered about, they did not exert much of an influence up to this time. Five of the first six Baptist preachers who came to the Kentucky country located in Hardin County in the very communities where Thomas Lincoln established his cabin homes. Two of these men, Barrett and Taylor, organized the church at Elizabethtown. Spencer says, "This was the first church gathered on Kentucky soil."[11] It was from Joseph Barrett, one of these men, that Joseph Hanks, presumably the great-grandfather of Abraham Lincoln, purchased his Kentucky land.

The same day, June 17, 1781, that the Severns Valley (Elizabethtown) church was constituted, John Gerrard was ordained as its preacher. He was, therefore, the first pastor of a Baptist church in the great valley lying between the Allegheny and Rocky Mountains. Gerrard is supposed to have been captured by the Indians in 1782. The church was constituted with eighteen members; and three slaves—Mark, Bambo, and Dinah—the property of Jacob Vanmeter, were in the original constitution. In 1782, another church was established on the South Fork of Nolin River, two miles south of where Lincoln was born. Not long after this a part of the Severns Valley membership began worshipping on the North Fork of Nolin River, two miles north of the Lincoln birthplace cabin site.

It might be said the slavery controversy began in the churches of the western country when Joshua Carman was called to preach at the Elizabethtown Church on June 23, 1787. The following year he formed the Rolling Fork church, which was about ten miles north of the place where Abraham Lincoln was born. Possibly the presence of both slaves and their masters in the same church may have had something to do with Carman's anti-slavery attitude, as the slaves were not granted all the privileges of the church. Spencer has this to say about Carman:

"He was regarded as a man of good ability, but becoming fanatical on the subject of slavery, he induced Rolling Fork Church to withdraw from the association and declare non-fellowship with all slave holders."

10. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists, p. 484.
11. Ibid, pp. 16, 17, and 18.

It was Carman who prompted the Rolling Fork Church to put this question to the Salem association in 1789: "Is it lawful in the sight of God for a member of a Christian church to keep his fellow creatures in perpetual slavery?" The answer is recorded as follows: "The association judges it improper to enter into so important a question at this time." According to Spencer, this was "the first reference to the lawlessness of slavery in the churches of Kentucky" or he might have said the entire western country.[12]

An understudy of Joshua Carman succeeded him at Elizabethtown. His name was Josiah Dodge. He received a call by the church at a meeting held on October 22, 1791, and by 1792 he was preaching for three other churches: Rolling Fork, North Fork or Nolin, and Lick Creek, as well as the church at Elizabethtown. On January 23, 1796, the following question was presented to the Elizabethtown Church: "Is slavery oppression or not? The query being taken up was answered in the affirmative. It was oppression."

The next month, on February 27, this question was brought before the meeting: "Can we, as a church, have fellowship with those that hold the righteousness of perpetual slavery?" It was affirmed that "they could not."[13]

In the following paragraph Spencer reveals that it was at this time that "Joshua Carman and Josiah Dodge formed the first Emancipation church near Bardstown, Kentucky. The exact date or name it bore is not known, but it is supposed to have been the first organization of its kind in Kentucky."[14]

According to Tarrants' "History of Emancipation," Carmen and Dodge were the first preachers who separated from the Baptists on account of slavery. We have already observed that the very community which later became the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln was the stamping ground of the first Emancipation preacher west of the Allegheny Mountains. It was here that the question about the right and wrong of slavery was first put to the wilderness churches. Here the church for the first time declared non-fellowship with slave holders, and here there was organized the first Emancipation church in the western country.

II. LINCOLN'S CHILDHOOD CONTACTS WITH SLAVERY

The South Fork Church, which was located within two miles of Lincoln's birthplace, had experienced a long session of unrest which seemed to come to a climax just about the time of Abraham Lincoln's birth. It might be said that Lincoln was born in the very midst of a slavery controversy.

On June 28, 1806, a slave by the name of David was excluded for running away from his master. At the meeting on the sixteenth of August two members of the congregation were called upon by the church "to answer to the report that is in circulation for tying up a man and whipping him. They come forward and acknowledge it was a matter of fact."[15]

12. Ibid, p. 163.
13. Severn's Valley Baptist Church Minute Book.
14. Spencer, p. 163.
15. South Fork Baptist Church Record Book.

On December 19, 1807, in this South Fork Church and but a little more than a year before Abraham Lincoln was born, the minister of this congregation declared he was for emancipation. The church record copied verbatim follows:

"Brother Whitman declares himself 'amansapater' and requests the church to know whether they would wish him to attend them any longer or not. The church took it up and labored some time and agreed to postpone it till our next meeting."[16]

The church records do not indicate that this postponed meeting or any other business meeting was held until August 16 of the following year, when an entry records the names of fifteen members who "went out from the church on account of slavery." Among them was an uncle of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Six months after the church split on the slavery question Abraham Lincoln was born in a cabin less than two miles away.

It was not until September, 1810, that the record book shows another assembly of the church members. During the monthly business meetings for the six following sessions the only record entered against the date enscribed is this significant note repeated in each instance: "The church met in peace." On the fourth Saturday in December, the following year, this entry appears: "Brother Dodson to request Brother William Whitman to attend our next meeting." This entry would make it appear as if the anti-slavery forces had been victorious, and it is confirmed by some of the members who withdrew on account of slavery, returning to the church.

Those who did not return joined with other anti-slavery advocates in forming the Little Mount Church, about three miles northeast of the birthplace cabin. This is the church with which the parents of Abraham Lincoln affiliated, although at this time they had moved from the birthplace farm to a point about six miles northeast or three miles beyond the Little Mount Church.

Here Abraham Lincoln heard his first sermons against slavery, by the eloquent minister, William Downs, who organized the church. Downs was brought up in the Rolling Fork Church, which took such an active part in anti-slavery movements. According to Spencer, the Baptist historian, Downs was "one of the most brilliant and fascinating orators in the Kentucky pulpit in his day . . . he was fond of controversy and engaged in several debates. His exceeding familiarity with the Scriptures, his ready wit, keen sarcasm, and brilliant oratory attracted the attention and won the admiration of the most intelligent and refined people within the limits of his acquaintance."[17]

Following Downs there came to the Little Mount Church as a minister, David Elkins. Jesse Friend, uncle of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, who with other members of the South Fork Church left it on account of slavery, was evidently a friend of Elkins, as indicated by the church record. While Elkins may not have been as brilliant an orator as Downs, he was without question an anti-slavery man. We might conclude that Abraham Lincoln's close association with the early church and her preachers must have made a very deep impression upon him.[18]

16. Ibid.
17. Spencer, p. 164.
18. Ibid, p. 336.

As a small boy, Lincoln's direct contact with slavery may have been much like that of one whom the writer interviewed some years ago. He said, "I remember when I was a boy one night a gang of slaves was driven up to my father's house at dusk. The slave dealer wanted to put them in the barn for the night but father was afraid of fire and would not allow it. We had a big haystack outdoors and all the slaves, men, women, and children, were chained together and slept on the haystack that night. Some of the women had babies in their arms. I have never forgotten that sight." One such scene as that would be sufficient to impress it indelibly in any boy's mind.

Both of the cabin homes in which Abraham Lincoln lived in Kentucky were on the old Cumberland Road leading from Louisville to Nashville, Tennessee. Over this road many of the slaves grown in Kentucky were driven to the southern cotton markets, and Abraham Lincoln, as a boy, must have observed these people herded much the same as cattle and driven along the public highway.

It was probably such sights as he saw on the old Cumberland Road which gave him an intense hatred for slave dealers, as far as we know the only class which Lincoln singled out for his condemnation.

At Peoria on October 15, 1854, he said, "You have among you a sneaking individual of the class of native tyrant, known as the 'Slave Dealer.' He watches your necessities and crawls up to buy your slave at a speculative price. If you cannot help it you sell to him; but if you can help it you drive him from your door. You utterly dispise him. You do not recognize him as your friend or even as an honest man. Your children must not play with his; they may rollick freely with the little negroes, but not with the slave dealer's children."

Not far from the school Lincoln attended on Knob Creek was Atherton's Ferry. Here Lincoln observed slaves at work, as Atherton listed as many as eight slaves in the year 1816. The early biographers of the President have contended vigorously that Abraham Lincoln's father saw little or nothing of slavery while living in Kentucky. Of course, this would imply that Abraham Lincoln, himself, seldom came in contact with it. The following paragraph from Beveridge's work supports the opinions of early writers:

"Not the faintest evidence has been found indicating that slavery was so much as a contributing cause of their departure; indeed, it is doubtful whether that institution made any impression one way or another, on Thomas Lincoln's pallid mind."[19]

Beveridge's source of information was Herndon who claimed that:

"In all Hardin County—at that time a large area of territory—there were not over fifty slaves and it is doubtful if he saw enough of slavery to fill him with the righteous opposition to the institution with which he has so frequently been credited."[20]

Why William Herndon should make such statements as he did about the extent of slavery in Kentucky during Lincoln's boyhood is a mystery. If he had desired to know the truth about the matter, there were

19. Beveridge, Abraham Lincoln, Vol. 1, p. 33.
20. Herndon, Lincoln, Vol. 1, p. 20.

plenty of records available so that he need not have done any guessing about it. In fact he might have reviewed the history of his own family and been better informed about the question.

William Herndon was born in Green County, Kentucky, the county adjacent to the one in which Lincoln was born. His uncle, William Herndon, for whom it may be assumed the partner of Abraham Lincoln was named, from all records available seems to have been a slave dealer. On January 17, 1811, he sold to Andrew Barnett five slaves.[21] Another slave is recorded as having been sold by him to James Allen[21], yet he listed for taxation in 1812 seven slaves and only 200 acres of land.[22] Later a record appeared showing that William Herndon was in possession of a slave in a New Orleans jail, and he authorized an attorney, William Reach, to sell it and make a bill of sale.[23]

In 1811, when Abraham Lincoln was but two years old, the tax list for Hardin County shows that there were then 1,007 slaves listed for taxation. The white male population above sixteen years of age, this same year, was 1,627. This would indicate an average of at least two slaves for each family in the county.

One slave holder in Hardin County in the year 1813 listed fifty-eight slaves for taxation—eight more than Herndon claimed existed in the whole county. Denton Geoghigan, for whom Thomas Lincoln had a contract for getting out lumber for a mill, listed twenty slaves in 1816.

In his debate with Douglas at Alton, Abraham Lincoln must have recalled his father's removal from a slave state to a free state when he said: "How many Democrats are there about here who have left slave states and come into the free state of Illinois to get rid of the institution of slavery?" One voice interrupted here and said a thousand, another added one thousand and one, to which Lincoln responded, "I reckon there are a thousand and one."

As a final word about the slavery condition in Kentucky during the period of the Lincolns' residence in the state and the slavery agitation which contributed to Thomas Lincoln's desire to move, a paragraph from Spencer is timely, not for what it observes, but for what it fails to comprehend:

"The Emancipation movements accomplished little or no good and a vast amount of evil. It disturbed the Baptist churches in Kentucky for a period of thirty years. It rent asunder many of the churches, stirred up the bad passions of the people, gendered a spirit of insubordination among slaves, and almost entirely destroyed the influence and usefulness of a number of excellent preachers."[24]

Possibly this agitation did make some far-reaching contribution, unknown to Spencer, which found full expression in the life of a growing boy who was born and lived in the very midst of the turmoil. It is doubtful if there is any other spot on the American continent which saw more of the anti-slavery controversy previous to the year 1816 than Hardin County, Kentucky.

21. Green County Court Deed Book 6, p. 179.
21. Ibid, p. 259.
22. Green County Court Commission Tax Book for 1812, Archives of Kentucky State Historical Society.
23. Green County Court Deed Book 9, p. 14.
24. Spencer, p. 187.

III. LINCOLN'S EARLY REACTION TOWARDS THE MORAL ISSUE IN SLAVERY

If we could know all of the factors which contributed to the preparing of Abraham Lincoln for the task assigned him in the year 1860, we would conclude without doubt that the one event of most importance in his early years was the removal from a slave state to a free state. Lincoln crossing the Ohio River in 1816 may have been as important an event in the annals of American history as Washington crossing the Delaware.

For ten years after leaving Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln could have seen but little of slavery, and he was also out from under the continual agitation of the question. During this period the only memories of the slavery conditions in his old home would be a few of the more outstanding instances when extreme cruelty or injustice towards slaves had left a deep impression on his child mind.

With the change of location of the Lincoln home it was not long before there came a change in the personnel of the family itself. When Abraham was but nine years of age his mother died, and a year later a stepmother, Sarah Bush Johnston, came to take her place.

It is difficult to learn just what was his stepmother's attitude towards the slavery question. While it does not appear as if her father, Christopher Bush, was an owner of slaves, on one occasion he did have one laboring for him whose services he had hired. Sarah's first husband had been too poor to own slaves even if he had been inclined to do so. However, she had been brought up in Elizabethtown when both Carman and Dodge, the anti-slavery preachers, had served the congregation there.

Such information as Lincoln was able to gather about slavery during the early Indiana days must have come to him through books and newspapers or discussions which may have taken place at the various schools he attended. There may have been some sermons in the church on the slavery question, but it was no longer a point of controversy among the members.

Some time during his early life he is said to have read "Riley's Narrative," a book describing the adventures of a crew that was shipwrecked on the African coast. In this instance the white sailors were made slaves by the Africans, which was the reverse of the race dominance question in Kentucky. This must have greatly impressed Lincoln, and probably was the basis of one of his arguments relating to race superiority.

The newspapers which came to the community were the most fruitful sources of information about what was going on with respect to the slavery question. Some of the articles in the *Vincennes Sun* which Lincoln must have seen appeared under the following captions: The Abolition of Slavery, Colonization, Fugitive Slave Law in Indiana, Horrors of Slavery, Slavery Paragraph in Declaration of Independence, Position of Henry Clay on Slavery, etc.[25]

25. See Files of Vincennes Sun, State Library, Indianapolis.

One of the most important social experiments carried out in the western country was the Owen's Colony at New Harmony. Robert Owen is known to have been opposed to slavery and became in later years one of the champions of emancipation. Lincoln must have been influenced somewhat indirectly by this colony, although we have been unable to find any reference he ever made to this group.

Although living in a free state, we are not to assume that one residing so close to the Kentucky border would fail to come in contact, from time to time, with slavery. He wrote to his friend, Speed, in 1855: "I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to their stripes and unrequited toil, but I bite my lips and be quiet."[26] It is possible that early scenes he observed along the Ohio were responsible for his reference to these runaway slaves.

When Lincoln was seventeen years of age he went to work for a ferry keeper on the banks of the Ohio River, and again had an opportunity to observe slavery at work. Some new slants on the institution were noticed at this time which he had not had occasion to observe before. Possibly one of the most disturbing factors was the growth of the slave traffic as indicated by the great number of negroes who were shipped to southern plantations.

Lincoln's reaction towards the scenes he must have witnessed on the Ohio River while working at Troy is set forth in a letter written to his friend, Joshua Speed, in which he recalled an incident on a boat trip which he made with Speed in 1840, about fifteen years after his employment by Taylor at the mouth of Anderson River on the Ohio. He said:

"You may remember as well as I do that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio there were on board ten or a dozen slaves shackled together with irons. That sight was a continual torment to me, and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio or any other slave border. It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable."[27]

Lincoln's river experience as a ferryman paved the way for his being engaged as a flatboatman. In 1828 he assisted in the construction of a boat at Rockport, a few miles south from where he had been working for Taylor. He piloted this boat to New Orleans that same year. For some unknown reason this trip which Lincoln made while still a youth has been overshadowed by the trip he made later on while residing in Illinois. He gives an account of this first trip in his autobiographical sketch, written in the third person, as follows:

"He was a hired hand merely, and he and a son of the owner, without other assistance, made the trip. The nature of part of the 'cargo-load,' as it was called, made it necessary for them to linger and trade along the sugar-coast; and one night they were attacked by seven negroes with intent to kill and rob them. They were hurt some in the melee, but succeeded in driving the negroes from the boat, and then 'cut cable,' 'weighed anchor,' and left."[28]

This dramatic episode, which was a personal experience, was recited at the expense of anything of interest he may have observed at New Orleans. According to Beveridge, the trip "gave a new experience to the

26. Letter to Joshua F. Speed, August 24, 1855.
27. Ibid.
28. Autobiographical Sketch Prepared for Scripps.

two youths from the backwoods of Indiana, but there is no evidence of the impression made upon Lincoln by this, his second contact with slavery."[29] Here again Beveridge seems to have been influenced by the Herndon manuscripts to make another conclusion which is in contradiction to a written statement by Abraham Lincoln himself.

Lincoln makes no mention whatever of any incident that happened on the second trip to New Orleans with the exception of recalling the fact that "Hanks had not gone to New Orleans, but, having a family and being likely to be detained from home longer than at first expected, had turned back from St. Louis." Yet Herndon claims John Hanks was responsible for the story that "In New Orleans, for the first time Lincoln beheld the true horrors of human slavery. He saw negroes in chains—whipped and scourged."[30] Strange to say, however, the traditional reaction of Lincoln towards the slave markets on this latter visit is related by Hanks whom Lincoln says did not make the trip. This discrepancy drives us to the conclusion that it was on the eventful first trip that he saw the slave markets of New Orleans which so impressed him.

This assumption is supported by a letter which Abraham Lincoln wrote to Alexander Stephens on January 9, 1860: "When a boy I went to New Orleans on a flatboat, and there I saw slavery and slave markets as I have never seen them in Kentucky, and I heard worse of the Red River plantations." Since Lincoln made this trip to New Orleans on which he observed the slave market "when a boy," it must have been on the first instead of the second trip that he was so deeply impressed with what he saw there.

We can now conclude that long before Lincoln visited his wife's people at Lexington, Kentucky, he had some very decided notions about the wrongs of slavery. At least a dozen years before he visited Joshua Speed at Louisville and witnessed the scene mentioned by Nicolay and Hay, and at least three years before his river trip from Illinois to New Orleans he had witnessed the horrors of slavery, remembering, however, as he clearly implies in this letter to Stevens, the slavery conditions in Kentucky when he was a child.

In the comparatively brief autobiographical sketch, prepared for Scripps, Lincoln thought the protest with reference to slavery, in which he joined with Dan Stone, of sufficient importance to be printed in full, and he prefaced it with this paragraph:

"March 3, 1837, by a protest entered upon the 'Illinois House Journal' of that date, at pages 817 and 818, Abraham, with Dan Stone, another representative of Sangamon, briefly defined his position on the slavery question; and so far as it goes, it was then the same that it is now."

Then followed the protest:

"Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

29. Beveridge, Vol. 1, p. 88.
30. Herndon, Vol. 1, p. 75.

"They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils.

"They believe that the Congress of the United States has no power under the Constitution to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different states.

"They believe that the Congress of the United States has the power, under the Constitution, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but that the power ought not to be exercised, unless at the request of the people of the District.

"The difference between these opinions and those contained in the said resolutions is their reason for entering this protest.

"DAN STONE,
"ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

"Representatives from the County of Sangamon."

When Abraham Lincoln prepared and signed this protest which was purely voluntary, he was but twenty-eight years old, and he clearly stated at that time that he believed that "the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy." In June, 1860, he affirmed that the above statement "briefly defined his position on the slavery question" as far as it goes in 1860 as well as in 1837.

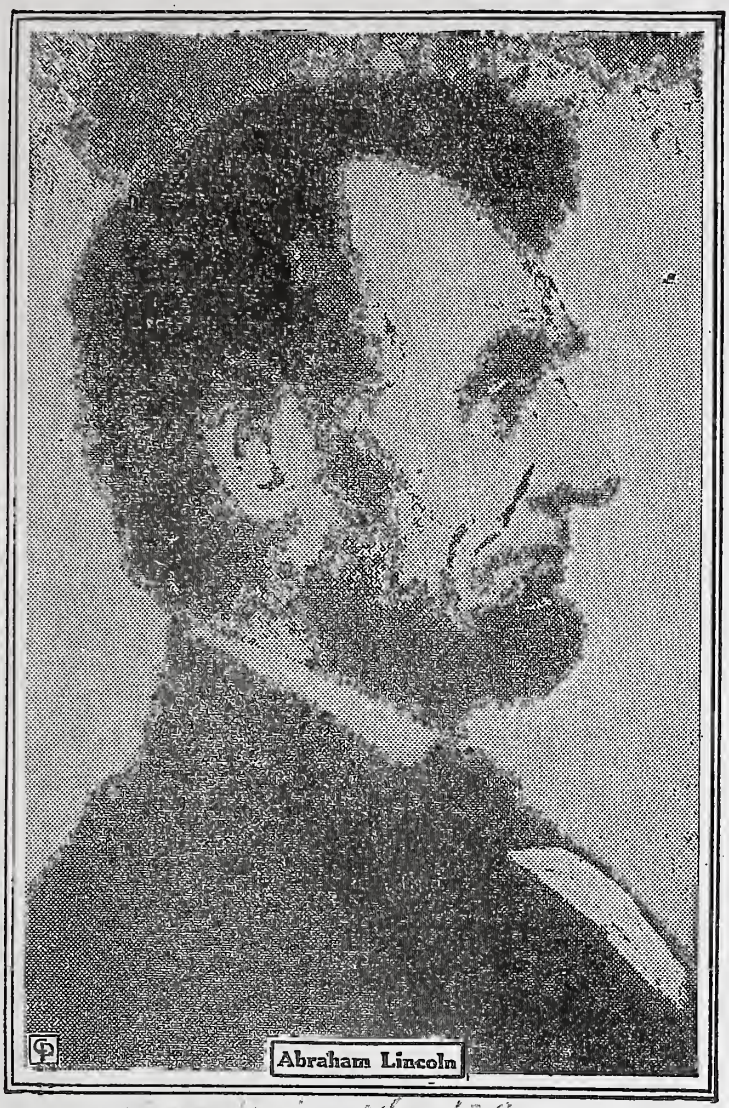
Some authors have thought because Lincoln did not wage a relentless campaign against slavery during his early political efforts that he was not much concerned about the system. We have Lincoln's own testimony, made in Chicago, on July 10, 1858, as to why he was inactive in the early days in any movement against slavery. He says:

"I have always hated it, but I have always been quiet about it until this new era of the introduction of the Nebraska bill began. I always believed that everybody was against it, and that it was in course of ultimate extinction."

A study of the slavery atmosphere of Lincoln's youth and observations of his different reactions at intervals during his life, allows one to conclude, that the brief excerpt from the letter to Hodges of Kentucky in 1864, used in the introduction of this paper, states most clearly his own and indirectly his parents' appraisal of slavery:

"I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel."

BEGINNING HUMBLE FOR GREAT EMANCIPATOR



Abraham Lincoln

LINCOLN SLAVERY FOE AS YOUTH; EARNING FIRST DOLLAR THRILL

By GROVER DICKMAN

Abrahama Lincoln, born Hodgenville, Ky., Feb. 12, 1809. Married Mary Todd 1842. Inaugurated President of the United States of America 1861, served 4 years, 1 month, 11 days. Assassinated April 14, 1865, and died May 15, 1865.

Abraham Lincoln was born in a little cabin that contained only one room. It had a huge outside chimney, a single window and a rough door. In many ways the home was very uncomfortable, but it sheltered a happy family which consisted of little "Abe," his father and mother, and one sister who was two years older than he.

When he was four years old he had an opportunity to attend school for a short time.

One of Lincoln's schoolmates says that he was an unusually bright boy at school, and made splendid progress in his studies. He got spicewood bushes, hacked them up on a log and burned them two or three together to give him light for study.

The other boys planted the corn in what we called the large field; I dropped the pumpkin seeds. I dropped two seeds in every other hill, in every other row. The next morning there came a big rain in the hills, it did not rain in the valley, but the water, coming down through the gorges, washed ground, corn, pumpkin seeds and all clear off the field."

In the fall after Abraham was seven years old the family moved to Indiana.

It took a little more than a week to reach their new home. There was no house for them to live in, so they built a hunter's camp for shelter during the winter.

DEER, FISH FOOD

The next February Mr. Lincoln, with the little help that Abraham could give, cut logs for a cabin, then cut them into proper lengths and put notches near the ends, so they would fit together when laid up.

RECALLS FLOOD

As soon as Abe was strong enough to perform simple tasks, such as bringing tools, carrying water, picking berries, and dropping seeds, he was put to work. While he was in the White House he was asked how he would like to visit his old home in Kentucky. "I would like it very much." Mr. Lincoln replied, "I remember that old home very well. Our farm was composed of three fields. It lay in the valley surrounded by hills and deep gorges. Sometimes when there came a big rain in the hills the water would come down through the gorges and spread all over the farm. The last thing that I remember of doing here, we did on Saturday afternoon.

For food they had plenty of game such as bear, deer, turkey, ducks, etc. They had fish from the streams and plenty of berries and wild fruit, which they dried for the winter. It was difficult to raise wheat, so corn dodgers were the every day bread for the family. On Sundays, they had wheat cakes. Potatoes were the only vegetable they tried to raise.

Before the Lincolns had been in Indiana two years Nancy Hanks Lincoln died and left a desolate home. Sarah Lincoln did the best she could to make it comfortable, but a girl of eleven could not take a woman's place. After some months Mr. Lincoln returned to Kentucky and found a new mother for the

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 7)

children. This Mrs. Lincoln had three children of her own, one boy and two girls. She also brought a four-horse wagon load of furniture and clothing. She brought "one fine bureau, one table, one set of chairs, one large clothes-chest, cooking utensils, knives, forks, bedding, and other things."

Abraham was 10 years old when his new mother came, but he was able to do considerable work with his ax. With it he had helped to make the first clearing and as he said himself, "from that time till within my 23rd year I was almost constantly handling that most useful instrument." He also learned to plow, to wield the sickle, to thresh grain with a flail, to fan and clean it with a sheet. He had learned to do these things so well that when not needed at home there was always some neighbors who wanted to hire him. He received 25 cnts a day for his work.

FIRST DOLLAR THRILL

Lincoln often told of how he earned his first dollar. He had taken a cargo of bacon and garden truck down the river to a trading post and, having disposed of it, was strolling along the bank of the river Two men appeared on the bank and wished to be rowed to a steamer that was approaching. There was no landing here and passengers for steamers had to be taken out to them in small boats. These men asked Abraham to row them out in his boat. He said, "I could scarcely believe my eyes. You may think it a little thing but it was the most important incident in my life. I could scarcely believe that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in so short a time. I was more hopeful from that on."

The next year when he was 19, he made a second voyage down the river. Along the lower Mississippi, he, for the first time, saw slaves working on plantations, under the lash. Coming up the river, on the boat there were slaves who had been taken from their families never to return, and Lincoln sympathized with them. While in New Orleans it is said that he and Dennis Hanks passed a slave auction one morning. After observing for a little time he left in disgust, saying. "Boys, let's get away from here. If ever I get a chance to hit that thing, (meaning slavery) I'll hit it hard."

When Abraham was 21 years old the family came to Illinois and settled near Decatur. Lincoln wrote, "Here we built a log cabin into which we moved, and also made sufficient rails to fence 10 acres of ground, broke the ground and raised a crop of corn upon it the same year."

MEETING DESCRIBED

One of the most interesting incidents in Lincoln's life was his meeting with Joshua Speed. Mr. Robert E. Knowles tells it in this way:

"It is evening, the door slowly opens. Enter the lean, lank, gaunt figure of a sad-faced man of 28, carrying a saddlebag which saddlebag contains all his earthly possessions. He walks timidly toward the waiting Speed, his great form looming large in the twilight. He would know the cost of furnishing a bed, for he proposed to try to live in the village as a lawyer. Speed calculates, soiling a square foot of good brown paper the while. 'Seventeen dollars,' quoth he. Abraham Lincoln admits, sadly, that so much money he does not possess—nor see any liklihood of possessing. If Speed would trust him he might pay some day. Speed will trust him. Lincoln repents himself and says, sadly too, that he does not care to begin with so much debt; he starts for the door. Speed studies the face in the semi-darkness; calls him back; he has a bed of his own upstairs he says the stranger is welcome to half of it till he gets a foothold. Lincoln demurs, then accepts, mumbling his thanks the while—the saddlbag is borne aloft to the room; and Speed knew not, through the long years that followed, that he lay night by night beside one of the immortals, toward whom the eyes of the world and future generations turned in reverence."

Long years after Lincoln's martyr crown was won, Speed referred to this life romance in these words: "I remember his face as he came into my store that April evening. I slept beside him for four years. And now I can hardly realize it; to think that he was dependent on me for a place to lay his head, all his worldly possessions in the saddlebag that lay on the floor and then to recall that I lived to visit him in the White House as President of the United States, to see him holding his own with the greatest statesmen of Europe, making and unmaking generals and admirals, holding his cabinet of stalwarts in the hollow of his hand, carrying on his bosom the greatest war of history, dispatching ambassadors to foreign courts and dispensing the patronage of his august office, directing the legislation of the nation, holding in his hands the fortunes of millions and the lives of tens of thousands, affixing his signature to a document that gave liberty to four millions of the human race, saving an empire to itself and to the cause of liberty, and at last, his country delivered and his cause triumphant, dying amid a grief and reverence of Christendom—all this seems more like a dream than reality."

General Electric News
Fort Wayne, Indiana
February 10, 1939

The Greatest Lincoln Story Ever Told

Ida M. Tarbell Tells How He Reached His Stand on Slavery

Ida M. Tarbell, acknowledged as one of Abraham Lincoln's most distinguished biographers, says that the greatest story she ever heard about him deals with a decision he once made in the face of what seemed nothing but tragedy. As Miss Tarbell says, "the significant story of a man's life hinges upon his decisions."

Lincoln had been called upon to lead a minority in the greatest political struggle Illinois had ever faced. Briefly, it meant, if he accepted that he must lead the fight to prevent the boundaries of the United States to be extended to permit slavery.

He was opposed by Stephen A. Douglas, then the favorite senator of Illinois. Lincoln saw clearly, that if the party led by Douglas was victorious it meant an America all devoted to slavery.

The night he was called upon to render his answer he took counsel with himself alone. He picked his office Bible up and opened it to Matthew's story of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.

"And he fell on his face," read Lincoln aloud, "and prayed saying, 'Oh my Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: Nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt!' "

To Lincoln here was the answer, and he dropped on his knees and prayed.

In those brief few hours with himself Abraham Lincon made his greatest decision.

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1083 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA January 9, 1950

SLAVERY LETTER—LINCOLN TO HODGES

Those who have available microfilm copies of the Robert Lincoln Papers in the Library of Congress can testify to the highly supplemental value of the manuscripts. Correspondence of Abraham Lincoln can be more fully understood now that we have letters before us that reveal the circumstances which drew from the President his unique and pointed communications. No finer example of this contribution is offered than the preliminary and aftermath comments on one of the most famous of Lincoln's writings—the slavery letter written on April 4, 1864 to H. G. Hodges of Frankfort, Kentucky.

Mr. Hodges was editor of The Frankfort Commonwealth which was classified by the editor as "a loyal newspaper." The salutation paragraph of the letter in question indicates that Governor Bramlette, Senator Dixon and Mr. Hodges had previously paid Lincoln a visit at Washington. One would surmise from the letter that is was just the report of a conference where Lincoln made a few comments on the slavery question. However, a letter written to Lincoln by Hodges on May 10, 1864, after receiving the copy of the remarks on slavery throws a different light on its origin.

Mr. Hodges referred to "your views in regard to slavery, as set forth in that little speech in your reception room." Here we have Lincoln in a new role, that of an interpreter, which so impressed the listeners that they considered it a speech. Mr. Hodges further states that he "could not resist the temptation to ask the favor of you to write it out for me." Mr. Hodges reveals that he had received "the thanks of many old and young friends in Kentucky for having obtained your mind as set forth in that letter."

Horace Greeley had the same Lincoln letter called to his attention and commented on it in the New York Tribune for April 29, 1864, in part as follows: "As we are known not to favor his (Mr. Lincoln's) renomination, we cannot be blinded by partiality in our judgment that few men have ever lived who could have better explained and commended his course and attitude with regard to Slavery than he has done in his late letter to Mr. Hodges of Kentucky."

The letter follows:

Executive Mansion, April 4, 1864.

My dear Sir: You ask me to put in writing the substance of what I verbally said the other day in your presence, to Governor Bramlette and Senator Dixon. It was said about as follows:

I am naturally antislavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel, and yet I have never understood that the presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling. It was in the oath I took that I would, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take the office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power. I understand, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I had publicly declared this many times, and in many ways. And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery. I did understand, however, that my oath to preserve the Constitution to the best of my ability imposed upon me the duty of preserving, by every indispensable means, that government—that nation, of which that Constitution was the organic law. Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the Constitution? By general law, life and limb must be protected, yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong, I assume this ground, and now avow it. I could not feel that, to the best of my ability, I had even tried to preserve the Constitution, if, to save slavery or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country, and Constitution all together. When, early in the war, General Fremont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When, a little later, General Cameron, then Secretary of War, suggested arming of the blacks, I objected because I did not yet think it an indispensable necessity. When, still later, General Hunter attempted military emancipation, I again forbade it, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come. When in March and May and July, 1862, I made earnest and successive appeals to the border States to favor compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation and arming the blacks would come unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition, and I was, in my best judgment, driven to the alternative of either surrendering the Union, and with it the Constitution, or of laying strong hand upon the colored element. I chose the latter. In choosing it, I hoped for greater gain than loss; but of this, I was not entirely confident. More than a year of trial now shows no loss by it in our foreign relations, none in our home popular sentiment, none in our white military force—no loss by it anyhow or anywhere. On the contrary it shows a gain of quite a hundred and thirty thousand soldiers, seamen and laborers. These are palpable facts, about which, as facts, there can be no caviling. We have the men; and we could not have had them without the measure.

And now let any Union man who complains of the measure test himself by writing down in one line that he is for subduing the rebellion by force of arms; and in the next, that he is for taking these hundred and thirty thousand men from the Union side, and placing them where they would be but for the measure he condemns. If he cannot face his case so stated, it is only because he cannot face the truth.

I add a word which was not in the verbal conversation. In telling this tale I attempt no compliment to my own sagacity. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years' struggle, the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man, devised or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

Yours truly,
A. LINCOLN.

TRIBUNE PRINTS UNPUBLISHED LINCOLN VIEWS

[The Tribune begins printing today a series of unpublished letters and documents in the handwriting of Abraham Lincoln, whose 145th birthday anniversary next Friday will be marked thruout most of the world. The new material, discovered too late to be included in Lincoln's collected works, recently issued, was written between 1856 and 1860, and largely involves his handling of political problems as he arose to the stature of a candidate for the Presidency.]

BY PERCY WOOD

One of the great disappointments to Abraham Lincoln in the years before he became a candidate for the Presidency came in 1856 when his close friend, Leonard Swett of Clinton, lost a Republican nomination for Congress downstate to Owen Lovejoy of Princeton, an abolitionist preacher.

Lincoln was a violent anti-abolitionist; he thought the abolitionists would destroy the country. His startled reaction to Lovejoy's victory and his astonishment at the growing sweep of anti-slavery thinking in north central Illinois are strongly emphasized in the first of his hitherto unpublished letters now being printed by THE TRIBUNE.

Written to Judge

Most of the recently discovered material was addressed to Judge David Davis of Bloomington, circuit rider with Lincoln and one of his favorite companions and political confidants. Permission to print the series was given by State Sen. David Davis IV [R., Bloomington], great-grandson of the recipient.

Lovejoy, Swett's primary opponent in the 3d congressional district in 1856, was a brother of the murdered abolitionist, Elijah Parish Lovejoy, editor of the Alton Observer and founder of an Illinois auxiliary to the American Anti-Slavery society. His organization of that body so incensed people in Alton that they burned the Observer's press time and again, and, finally, in a mob action, shot and killed Elijah Lovejoy Nov. 7, 1837, as he attempted to protect a warehouse in which still another press was stored.

Kneels Beside Body

Owen Lovejoy knelt beside the body and vowed never to forsake the cause that had been "sprinkled" with his brother's blood. He became a Congregational minister in Princeton, was elected to the legislature in 1854 to lead the anti-slavery forces and, according to historians, deserved more credit than any other person for the increase in abolitionist sentiment in Illinois during that day.

The 3d district then spread over a considerable territory, including Danville, Bloomington and Princeton, and it does

[Continued on page 2, col. 5]

Springfield, May 26. 1860

Dear Judge-

The foregoing is the body of about such a letter as I think you should write- Of course you will put it in your own hand writing, preserving proper heading; and adding at the bottom whatever assurances of your own you may think fit; that I will be governed by it's position.

Your friend as ever

A. Lincoln

[TRIBUNE Photo]

Hitherto unpublished Abraham Lincoln letter to Judge David Davis, his convention manager, after he won 1860 Republican Presidential nomination, advising Davis how to set forth Lincoln's political intentions.

Since parting with you, I have had full, and frequent conversations with Mr. Lincoln. The substance of what he says is that he neither is now will be, in advance of the election, committed to any man, clique, or faction; and that, in case the new administration shall devolve upon him, it will be his pleasure, and, in his view, the part of duty, and wisdom, to deal fairly with all- Not thinking he will need the assistance of all; and that, even if he had friends to reward, or enemies to punish, as he has not, he could not afford to dispense with the best talent, nor to outrage the popular will in any locality-

(over)

[TRIBUNE Photo]

Excerpt of note by Abraham Lincoln which he advised his manager, Judge Davis, to copy over his own signature and send to factional leaders in Republican party as Lincoln's platform for the 1860 Presidential election.

For Boys And Girls

Lincoln Disliked Slavery And Debt

There were three things that Abraham Lincoln disliked.

One was slavery. He first learned about slavery when he and another young man went down the Mississippi, working on a cargo boat.

There he saw slaves chained together like animals. Afterwards he wrote, "The sight was continued torment to me."

The second thing he hated was intemperance. William Berry, his partner in the store they started, began to waste all his time drinking.

Berry also spent all the store's profits, so they had to give it up.

The other thing Lincoln hated was debt. Everyone knows how he once walked miles to return a few cents that belonged to one of his customers.

When the small store failed Lincoln was left owing $1100. He worked for years till he was able to pay it all off. But he learned not to go into debt.

We have been able to learn many new things about Lincoln since a collection of his papers was opened a few years ago in Washington, D. C.

The old boxes contained letters, blessings, clippings, pleas, apologies, and Army papers.

Here are some of the items Lincoln thought fit to keep:

There are letters from all over the world praising him for doing away with slavery. One man in Maryland felt so pleased he sent Lincoln a half dozen hams and wrote " . . . please accept on the occasion of the proclamation as a slight tribute of respect."

From colored soldiers in Nashville came this letter: "God bless you, Abraham Lincoln, for those noble words that bring joy to so many thousands of colored soldiers and so many hundreds of thousands of women and children—words that endear you for all time to all who love freedom and the nation."

One man wrote "My son is sentenced by military commission to be hanged. The time set for his execution is Friday 13, January.

"I most earnestly pray that you respite him (give him more time) for 15 days to enable him to see his family and prepare for another world. . ."

Mr. Lincoln must have given the boy more time, or he would never have kept the letter.

2/11/1959

Voice of the People

Sun-Telegram 2-12-63
San Bernardino-Calif.

Abe Lincoln Was Friend of American Labor

'Ahead of His Time'

Editor of The Sun-Telegram: Abraham Lincoln was an early advocate of "free labor"—far ahead of his time.

Lincoln recognized the rights of workers to form unions, to bargain with their employers and to strike if necessary.

"Free labor" has the inspiration of hope," he wrote several years before entering the White House.

"Pure slavery has no hope," he added.

He warned working people to "beware of prejudice, working division and hostility among themselves."

Almost 100 years later at a time of struggle over civil rights and integration, these words seem almost prophetic.

Lincoln's first message to Congress in 1861, included these words on relationship of capital and labor:

"Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruits of labor and could not have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration. Capital has its rights, which are as worthy of protection as any other rights."

In this, as in any other year, conservatives and reactionary orators will be quoting Lincoln to prove he was their advocate.

But trade unionists know that the real Lincoln was concerned with the rights of labor and the welfare of the workers.

MARTIN B. HEISLER
San Bernardino

The Fort Wayne News-Sentinel
Fort Wayne, Indiana
August 29, 1963

DAVID LAWRENCE SAYS:

Lincoln's Other Race Views Common to Many Americans

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 — They stand before the shrine of Abraham Lincoln — before the impressive edifice which memorializes a great man. But do all those assembled this week before the massive statue of the country-lawyer who became President of the United States know what he really said about the race problem? Would the Negro venture to quote what Lincoln actually said in his public speeches more than 100 years ago?



David Lawrence

Is it generally realized, for instance, that Lincoln didn't favor the social equality of Negroes and whites and frankly stated that he didn't believe this should be established by law or otherwise? Also would what Lincoln had to say about the legitimacy of "resisting" court decisions be approved today by the members of the American Bar Association who voted recently for a resolution condemning the effort of certain groups to correct—by legal methods — rulings of the Supreme Court of the United States considered to be unjust and arbitarry?

Yet it's all in a book published in 1958 by the Library of Congress, giving the stenographic records of speeches made by Abraham Lincoln in his famous debates with Stephen A. Douglas. Lincoln denounced slavery and then explained his position on the race problem generally as he said:

"I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which in my judgment will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position.

"I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the Negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas, he is not my equal in many respects — certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man . . .

"What next? Free them and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people will not. Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment is not the sole question, if, indeed it is any part of it. A universal feeling, whether well or ill-founded, cannot be safely disregarded. We cannot, then, make them equals."

In another speech in 1858, Lincoln said:

"I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races — that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race . . .

"I will add to this that I have never seen to my knowledge a man, woman or child who was in favor of producing a perfect equality, social and political, between Negroes and white men."

The same year Lincoln bitterly criticized the Supreme Court for its decision in the Dred Scott Case upholding slavery as a property right. He said of the decision:

"We propose so resisting it as to have it reversed if we can, and a new judicial rule established upon this subject."

So, irrespective of the homage being paid to Abraham Lincoln this week for a particular purpose, there are plenty of quotations which, if uttered by anyone else today, would cause many whites and Negroes to denounce such a spokesman as a "racist" or "extremist." Yet the fact is that many people who want to see the Negro given every opportunity to advance in the economic field and enjoy the political privileges and benefits of life probably share the historic views of Abraham Lincoln.

Chi. Sun. Tribune - Oct. 16, 77

Vernon Jarrett

The real message of the Bakke case



NEARLY 50 scholarly legal briefs have been filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in the widely debated Bakke fight over affirmative action in higher education. But none of them, in my judgment, came out and bluntly exposed what this fight is really all about.

Allan Bakke vs. The Regents of the University of California at Davis must be placed in the context of this country's economic and social history. This is important in order to understand why there is a resistance to civil rights laws, presidential executive orders, and all meaningful measures designed to assure blacks and other minorities anything close to equitable treatment.

It is significant—and consistent with historic patterns—that so many of Bakke's supporters who claim to want justice have in the past actually supported various civil rights endeavors. But in this and other instances where civil and human rights talk is translated into "right now" application, so many of them, often in a very refined manner, stand like Alabama's Gov. Wallace in front of the school house door.

Their position can be summed up like this: "We are for human rights. We support fair treatment for all races. We sympathize with disadvantaged minorities. We want to see them move up the ladder of success—so long as they don't interfere with or seriously compete with or even inconvenience us white folks."

Many well-intentioned whites, in a very refined manner, are standing like Gov. Wallace in front of the school house door.

THAT WAS Thomas Jefferson's problem. The author of the Declaration of Independence appeared to have an inner contempt for the institution of slavery. But he couldn't get around to freeing the slaves when he contemplated the inconveniences and economic displacement it could cause among a few white men.

Abraham Lincoln, "The Great Emancipator," is an even more classic example. Lincoln, it is said, was revolted by slavery at an early age. But every time he had an opportunity to take a forthright stand against it his abiding concern for the inconvenience and unfairness to white slave owners caused him to take a conservative position.

Even as a young lawyer in Illinois in to retrieve a runaway slave captured in the free state of Illinois. He lost the case but his position was [and it remained until his death] that a person should not be deprived [unconstitutionally] of his property — even if that property was another human being.

Lincoln was not alone. There is reason to believe that most of the Northern supporters of the Union's cause harbored hope during the early stages of the Civil War that they could win without destroying the slave system.

ONE HISTORIAN estimates that only one out of ten Union soldiers considered himself in a moral war against an immoral instituion. Most Union soldiers and many of their commanding officers from the Midwest were opposed to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Desertions from the army were widely reported after Lincoln's action was announced in Ohio, Illinois and Indiana.

The Chicago Tribune, one of the few militant newspapers in the Midwest, resorted to all sorts of pressures to help prod Lincoln into finally issuing the proclamation.

Many other Midwestern newspapers played up the fear of hordes coming from slave states and competing with white workers for jobs. Much anti-black propaganda was aimed at white immigrants such as the Germans and the Irish. The Illinois legislature even considered a proposal that any black freedman caught [unconstitutionally] in Illinois "should receive 39 lashes on the bare back."

The Chicago Times attacked the Emancipation Proclamation as a "wicked and atrocious and revolting deed" which would lead to the "liberation of three million negro barbarians and their enfranchisement as citizens." That was a typical editorial from Midwestern journals, during slavery only from a white perspective.

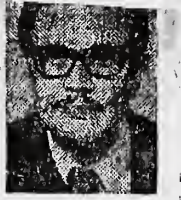
DESPITE THE YEARS of horrifying bondage forced on the slaves, Lincoln's sympathy for them was always diluted by his greater concern for the slavemaster. That's why he wanted the slaves purchased from their masters rather than liberated followed by the deportation of those freed in order that the newly emancipated would not interfere with the normal course of events for white Americans.

Whether they know it or not, that appears to be the core objection to present day affirmative action programs designed — once again — to assist those who have been disadvantaged for so long.

"We don't mind helping you blacks, Hispanics, and Indians as long as you don't inconvenience a single one of us."

Vernon Jarrett

Ex-slave's view of Lincoln



WHO WAS that lonely, solemn, Civil War leader named Abraham Lincoln? Who was that poet of a President who "saved the nation" 114 years ago?

What was he really like deep inside his heart? How did he really feel about slavery and the alternatives to it? What was his private attitude toward black people who, according to legend, he set free in 1863 with his Emancipation Proclamation?

The name of Lincoln is permanently etched in our national consciousness as that great soul who saved the Union.

However, the vote on his canonization is by no means unanimous.

Lincoln's contemporaries, including many who strongly supported the Union cause, were divided in their assesments of Lincoln's true character. Generations of historians, in fact, have offered volumes of research to prove that Lincoln was more man than saint. Several of his critics have implied that the same Lincoln who issued that heralded emancipation order was basically a racist. They offer Lincoln's own words to prove their point.

AT THE same time, Lincoln worshipers offer a long list of his pithy, wisdom-filled statements to prove that "in his heart of hearts" he detested slavery.

The most frequently quoted statement exposing Lincoln's alleged racism dates back to his debate with Stephen A. Douglas during their campaign for the United States Senate. On Sept. 18, 1858, at Charleston, Ill., Lincoln assured a largely anti-black crowd that, contrary to Douglas' charges, he was opposed to racial mixing. Here are his words:

"I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races. I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people . . ."

That statement drew resounding applause. Lincoln didn't stop there.

"And I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality," he declared.

"And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race . . ."

LINCOLN'S supporters argue that this was the only declaration he could make publicly while running for a statewide office in that part of Illinois. At that time the state had its own "black codes" and was peopled with a steady flow of migrants from the slave South. In fact, in 1837, at Alton, Ill., Elijah Lovejoy, a white abolitionist newspaper editor, was lynched.

His defenders also point to Lincoln's "torment" in 1841 when he witnessed a group of slaves shackled with irons during a boat trip up the Ohio river.

And there was that Lincoln who in 1862 told publisher Horace Greeley about his "oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

Two years later Lincoln wrote a friend that he was "naturally" anti-slavery.

"If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong," he declared. "I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel."

During the last days of the Civil War, Lincoln told Union soldiers from Indiana, many of whom harbored racist feelings, "Whenever I hear anyone argue for slavery I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."

HOWEVER, during the final months of Lincoln's life, he still clung tenaciously to the idea of "deportation" as the solution to America's race question.

The name of Lincoln is permanently etched in our national consciousness as that great soul who saved the Union and ended slavery.

He stated that view in speeches before the Congress and he attempted to sell his deportation plans to black leaders who visited his White House office.

While several black spokesmen had earlier advocated an exodus from American racial oppression, the majority rejected Lincoln's several deportation schemes.

One of those who rejected deportation as proposed by Lincoln, the politician, while respecting Lincoln, the man, was a phenomenal self-taught runaway slave named Frederick Douglass. He was the most famous black man of his era.

Eleven years after the assassination of the President by John Wilkes Booth, Douglass described the several personalities that came together in Lincoln in an illuminating portrait never duplicated before nor since. The occasion was April 14, 1876. The black leaders of America had gathered in Washington to unveil a Freedmen's Monument in memory of Lincoln in the capital's Lincoln Park.

THE PRESIDENT, members of the Senate and the House, and the justices of the Supreme Court were present to hear Douglass, who had visited Lincoln several times at the White House and had been a guest at Lincoln's summer cottage.

Douglass addressed himself to both whites and the blacks at the ceremony.

"Despite the mist and haze . . . despite the tumult, the hurry, and confusion of the hour (the war years)," he said, "we (blacks) were able to make a comprehensive view of Abraham Lincoln, and to make reasonable allowance for the circumstances of his position.

"We came to the conclusion that the hour and the man of our redemption had somehow met in the person of Abraham Lincoln," declared Douglass.

In the same speech, however, Douglass made it clear that "Abraham Lincoln was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model. In his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought and in his prejudices, he was a white man.

"He came into the presidential chair upon one principle alone, namely, opposition to the extension of slavery. His arguments in furtherance of this policy had their motive and mainspring in his patriotic devotion to the interests of his own race. To protect, defend and perpetuate slavery in the states where it existed Abraham Lincoln was not less ready than any other President to draw the sword of the nation . . .

"HE WAS willing to pursue, recapture, and send back the fugitive slave to his master, and to suppress a slave rising for liberty, though the guilty masters were already in arms against the government. The race to which we (blacks) belong were not the special objects of his consideration . . . First, midst and last, you and yours were the objects of his deepest affection and his most earnest solicitude.

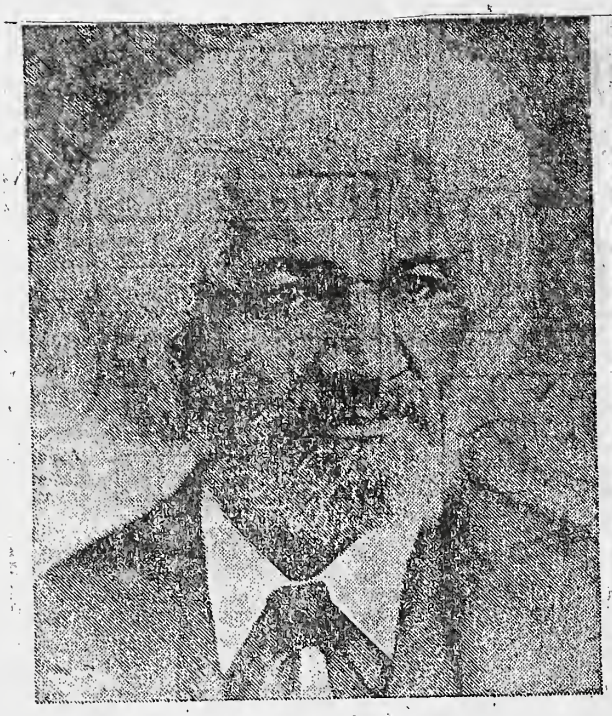
"You (whites) are the children of Abraham Lincoln. We (blacks) are at best only his step-children, children by adoption, children by force of circumstances and necessity . . .

"Lincoln saved for you a country. He delivered us from a bondage, one hour of which, according to (Thomas) Jefferson, was worse than ages of the oppression your fathers rose in rebellion to oppose . . ."

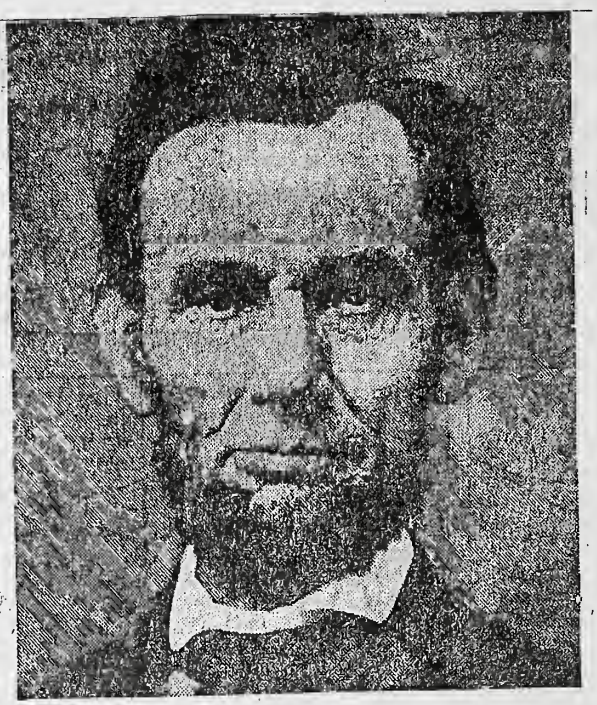
Douglass told his audience that the black American's faith in Lincoln was "taxed and strained to the uttermost, but it never failed."

Douglass referred to Lincoln's slowness to issue the Emancipation Proclamation and to his irritating reluctance to permit blacks to fight for the Union. While an estimated 187,000 blacks finally donned the Union blue and were credited with turning the war tide against the Confederacy, Lincoln nonetheless promoted deportation. And there was Lincoln's ever present sympathy for the slaveowners.

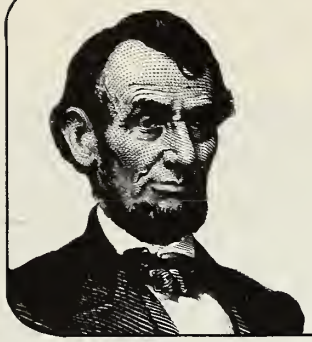
Blacks like Douglass "were at times grieved, stunned, and greatly bewildered," he declared. "But our hearts believed while they ached and bled." That faith was not "a blind and unreasoning superstition," said Douglass, "because we were able to take a comprehensive view of Abraham Lincoln."



Douglass: A comprehensive view.



Lincoln: A reasonable allowance.



Lincoln Lore

January, 1980

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

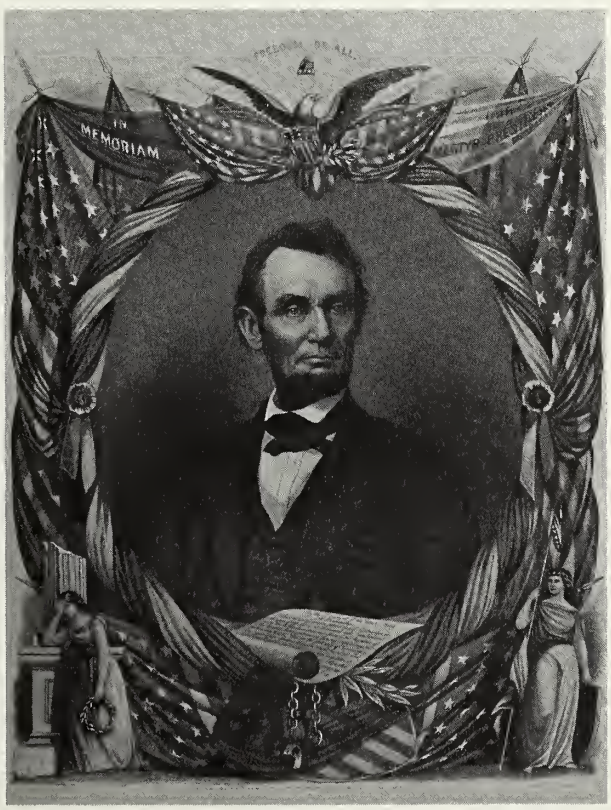
Number 1703

LINCOLN AND SLAVERY: AN OVERVIEW

Abraham Lincoln was a native of a slave state, Kentucky. In 1811 Hardin County, where Lincoln was born two years before, contained 1,007 slaves and 1,627 white males above the age of sixteen. His father's brother Mordecai owned a slave. His father's Uncle Isaac may have owned over forty slaves. The Richard Berry family, with whom Lincoln's mother Nancy Hanks lived before her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, owned slaves. Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, however, were members of a Baptist congregation which had separated from another church because of opposition to slavery. This helps explain Lincoln's statement in 1864 that he was "naturally anti-slavery" and could "not remember when I did not so think, and feel." In 1860 he claimed that his father left Kentucky for Indiana's free soil "partly on account of slavery."

Nothing in Lincoln's political career is inconsistent with his claim to have been "naturally anti-slavery." In 1836, when resolutions came before the Illinois House condemning abolitionism, declaring that the Constitution sanctified the right of property in slaves, and denying the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, Lincoln was one of six to vote against them (seventy-seven voted in favor). Near the end of the term, March 3, 1837, Lincoln and fellow Whig Dan Stone wrote a protest against the resolutions which stated that "the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy." It too denounced abolitionism as more likely to exacerbate than abate the evils of slavery and asserted the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia (though the right should not be exercised without the consent of the District's citizens). Congress, of course, had no right to interfere with slavery in the states. In 1860 Lincoln could honestly point to the consistency of his antislavery convictions over the last twenty-three years. That early protest "briefly defined his position on the slavery question; and so far as it goes, it was then the same that it is now."

In his early political career in the 1830s and 1840s, Lincoln had faith in the benign operation of American political institutions. Though "opposed to slavery" throughout the period, he "rested in the hope and belief that it was in course of ultimate extinction." For that reason, it was only "a minor question" to him. For the sake of keeping the nation together, Lincoln thought it "a paramount duty" to leave slavery in the states alone. He never spelled out the basis of his faith entirely, but he had confidence that the country was ever seeking to approximate the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. All men would be free when slavery, restricted to the areas where it already existed, exhausted the soil, became unprofitable, and was abolished by the slave-holding states themselves or perhaps by numerous individual emancipations. Reaching this goal, perhaps by the end of the century, required of dutiful politicians only "that we should never knowingly lend ourselves directly or indirectly, to prevent . . . slavery from dying a natural death — to find new places for it to live in, when it can no longer exist in the old." This statement, made in 1845, expressed Lincoln's lack of concern over the annexation of Texas, where slavery already existed. As a Congressman during the Mexican War, Lincoln supported the Wilmot Proviso because it would prevent the growth of slavery in parts of the Mexican cession where the institution did not already exist. He still considered slavery a "distracting" question, one that might destroy America's experiment in popular government if politicians were to "enlarge and agrivate" it either by seeking to expand slavery or to attack it in the states.

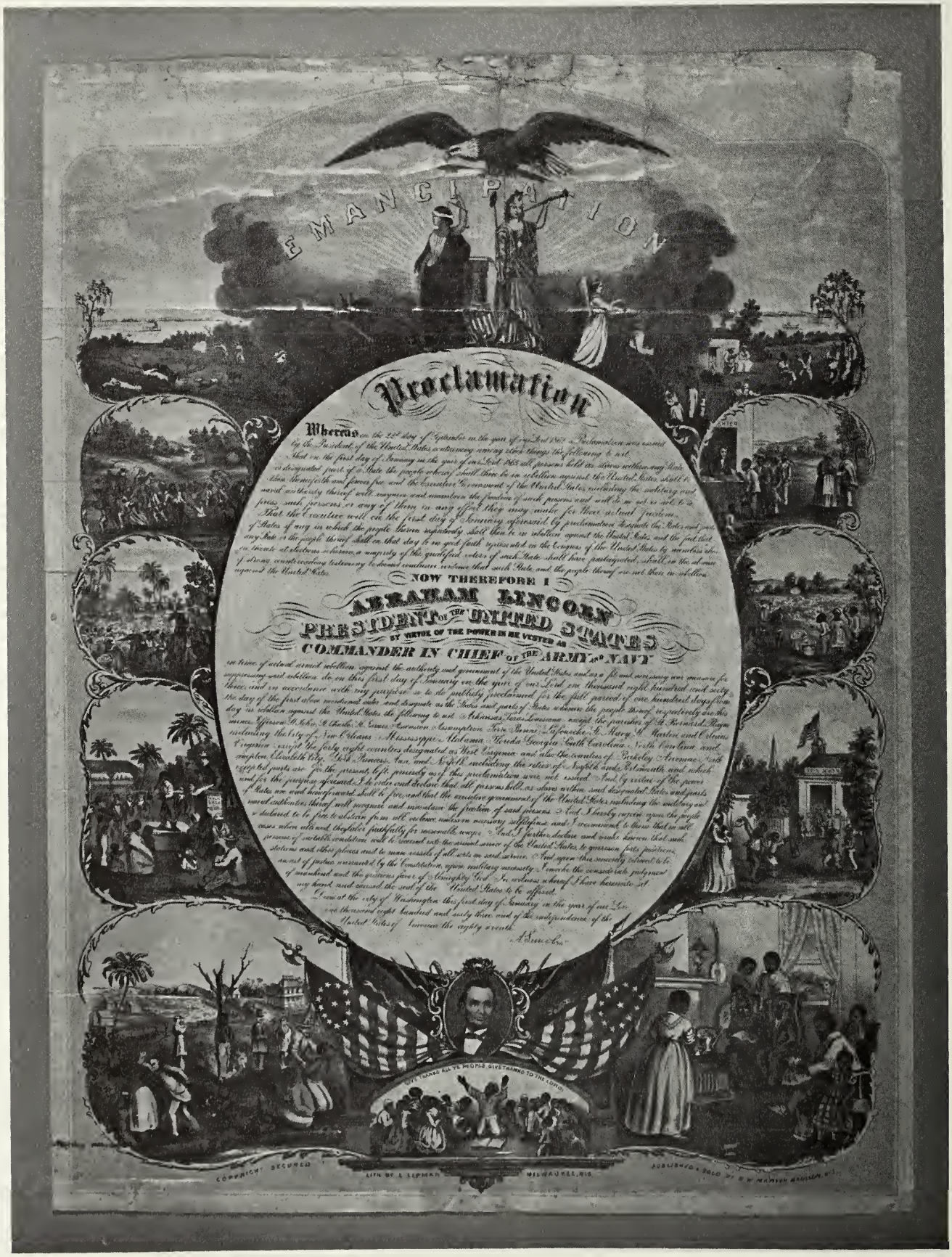


From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Like many other prints of Lincoln published soon after his death, this one celebrated the Emancipation Proclamation as his greatest act.

Lincoln became increasingly worried around 1850 when he read John C. Calhoun's denunciations of the Declaration of Independence. When he read a similar denunciation by a Virginia clergyman, he grew more upset. Such things undermined his confidence because they showed that some Americans did not wish to approach the ideals of the Declaration of Independence; for some, they were no longer ideals at all. But these were the statements of a society directly interested in the preservation of the institution, and Lincoln did not become enough alarmed to aggravate the slave question. He began even to lose interest in politics.

The passage of Stephen A. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Charles Eberstadt noted fifty-two printed editions of the Emancipation Proclamation issued between 1862 and 1865. He called this one a "highly spirited Western edition embellished with four large slave scenes lithographed at the left and four freedom scenes at the right."

in 1854 changed all this. Lincoln was startled when territory previously closed to slavery was opened to the possibility of its introduction by local vote. He was especially alarmed at the fact that this change was led by a Northerner with no direct interest in slavery to protect.

In 1841 Lincoln had seen a group of slaves on a steamboat being sold South from Kentucky to a harsher (so he assumed) slavery. Immediately after the trip, he noted the irony of their seeming contentment with their lot. They had appeared to be the happiest people on board. After the Kansas-Nebraska Act, he wrote about the same episode, still vivid to him, as "a continual torment to me." Slavery, he said, "has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable."

Lincoln repeatedly stated that slaveholders were no worse than Northerners would be in the same situation. Having inherited an undesirable but socially explosive political institution, Southerners made the best of a bad situation. Like all Americans before the Revolution, they had denounced Great Britain's forcing slavery on the colonies with the slave trade, and, even in the 1850s, they admitted the humanity of the Negro by despising those Southerners who dealt with the Negro as property, pure and simple — slave traders. But he feared that the ability of Northerners to see that slavery was morally wrong was in decline. This, almost as surely as disunion, could mean the end of the American experiment in freedom, for any argument for slavery which ignored the moral wrong of the institution could be used to enslave any man, white or black. If lighter men were to enslave darker men, then "you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own." If superior intellect determined masters, then "you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with an intellect superior to your own." Once the moral distinction between slavery and freedom were forgotten, nothing could stop its spread. It was "founded in the selfishness of man's nature," and that selfishness could overcome any barriers of climate or geography.

By 1856 Lincoln was convinced that the "sentiment in favor of white slavery . . . prevailed in all the slave state papers, except those of Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri and Maryland." The people of the South had "an immediate palpable and immensely great pecuniary interest" in the question; "while, with the people of the North, it is merely an abstract question of moral right." Unfortunately, the latter formed a looser bond than economic self-interest in two billion dollars worth of slaves. And the Northern ability to resist was steadily undermined by the moral indifference to slavery epitomized by Douglas's willingness to see slavery voted up or down in the territories. The Dred Scott decision in 1857 convinced Lincoln that the Kansas-Nebraska Act had been the beginning of a conspiracy to make slavery perpetual, national, and universal. His House-Divided Speech of 1858 and his famous debates with Douglas stressed the specter of a conspiracy to nationalize slavery.

Lincoln's claims in behalf of the slaves were modest and did not make much of the Negro's abilities outside of slavery. The Negro "is not my equal . . . in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment," Lincoln said, but "in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned, he is the equal of every other man, white or black." Lincoln objected to slavery primarily because it violated the doctrine of the equality of all men announced in the Declaration of Independence. "As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*," Lincoln said. "This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

Lincoln had always worked on the assumption that the Union was more important than abolishing slavery. As long as the country was approaching the ideal of freedom for all men, even if it took a hundred years, it made no sense to destroy the freest country in the world. When it became apparent to Lincoln that the country might not be approaching that ideal, it somewhat confused his thinking. In 1854 he admitted that as "Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any GREAT evil, to avoid a GREATER one." As his fears of a conspiracy to nationalize slavery increased, he ceased to make such statements. In the secession crisis he edged closer toward making liberty more important than Union. In New York City on February 20, 1861, President-elect Lincoln said:

> There is nothing that can ever bring me willingly to consent to the destruction of this Union, under which . . . the whole country has acquired its greatness, unless it were to be that thing for which the Union itself was made. I understand a ship to be made for the carrying and preservation of the cargo, and so long as the ship can be saved, with the cargo, it should never be abandoned. This Union should likewise never be abandoned unless it fails and the probability of its preservation shall cease to exist without throwing the passengers and cargo overboard. So long, then, as it is possible that the prosperity and the liberties of the people can be preserved in the Union, it shall be my purpose at all times to preserve it.

The Civil War saw Lincoln move quickly to save the Union by stretching and, occasionally, violating the Constitution. Since he had always said that constitutional scruple kept him from bothering slavery in the states, it is clear that early in the war he was willing to go much farther to save the Union than he was willing to go to abolish slavery. Yet he interpreted it as his constitutional duty to save the Union, even if to do so he had to violate some small part of that very Constitution. There certainly was no constitutional duty to do anything about slavery. For over a year, he did not.

On August 22, 1862, Lincoln responded to criticism from Horace Greeley by stating his slavery policy:

> If there be those who would not save the Union, unless they could at the same time *save* slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time *destroy* slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do *less* whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do *more* whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.
>
> I have here stated my purpose according to my view of *official* duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed *personal* wish that all men every where could be free.

The Emancipation Proclamation, announced just one month later, was avowedly a military act, and Lincoln boasted of his consistency almost two years later by saying, "I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery."

Nevertheless, he had changed his mind in some regards. Precisely one year before he issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln had criticized General John C. Frémont's emancipation proclamation for Missouri by saying that "as to . . . the liberation of slaves" it was "*purely political*, and not within the range of *military* law, or necessity."

> If a commanding General finds a necessity to seize the farm of a private owner, for a pasture, an encampment, or a fortification, he has the right to do so, and to so hold it, as long as the necessity lasts; and this is within military law, because within military necessity. But to say the farm shall no longer belong to the owner, or his heirs forever; and this as well when the farm is not needed for military purposes as when it is, is purely political, without the savor of military law about it. And the same is true of slaves. If the General needs them, he can seize them, and use them; but when the need is past, it is not for him to fix their permanent future

condition. That must be settled according to laws made by law-makers, and not by military proclamations. The proclamation in the point in question, is simply "dictatorship." It assumes that the general may do *anything* he pleases— confiscate the lands and free the slaves of *loyal* people, as well as of disloyal ones. And going the whole figure I have no doubt would be more popular with some thoughtless people, than that which has been done! But I cannot assume this reckless position; nor allow others to assume it on my responsibility. You speak of it as being the only means of *saving* the government. On the contrary it is itself the surrender of the government. Can it be pretended that it is any longer the government of the U.S. — any government of Constitution and laws, — wherein a General, or a President, may make permanent rules of property by proclamation?

I do not say Congress might not with propriety pass a law, on the point, just such as General Fremont proclaimed. I do not say I might not, as a member of Congress, vote for it. What I object to, is, that I as President, shall expressly or impliedly seize and exercise the permanent legislative functions of the government.

Critics called this inconsistency; Lincoln's admireres have called it "growth." Whatever the case, just as Lincoln's love of Union caused him to handle the Constitution somewhat roughly, so his hatred of slavery led him, more slowly, to treat the Constitution in a manner inconceivable to him in 1861. Emancipation, if somewhat more slowly, was allowed about the same degree of constitutional latitude the Union earned in Lincoln's policies.

The destruction of slavery never became the avowed object of the war, but by insisting on its importance, militarily, to saving the Union, Lincoln made it constitutionally beyond criticism and, in all that really mattered, an aim of the war. In all practical applications, it was a condition of peace — and was so announced in the Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863, and repeatedly defended in administration statements thereafter. He reinforced this fusion of aims by insisting that the Confederacy was an attempt to establish "a new Nation, . . . with the primary, and fundamental object to maintain, enlarge, and perpetuate human slavery," thus making the enemy and slavery one and the same.

Only once did Lincoln apparently change his mind. In the desperately gloomy August of 1864, when defeat for the administration seemed certain, Lincoln bowed to pressure from Henry J. Raymond long enough to draft a letter empowering Raymond to propose peace with Jefferson Davis on the condition of reunion alone, all other questions (including slavery, of course) to be settled by a convention afterwards. Lincoln never finished the letter, and the offer was never made. Moreover, as things looked in August, Lincoln was surrendering only what he could not keep anyway. He was so convinced that the Democratic platform would mean the loss of the Union, that he vowed in secret to work to save the Union before the next President came into office in March. He could hope for some cooperation from Democrats in this, as they professed to be as much in favor of Union as the Republicans. Without the Union, slavery could not be abolished anyhow, and the Democrats were committed to restoring slavery.

Lincoln had made abolition a party goal in 1864 by making support for the Thirteenth Amendment a part of the Republican platform. The work he performed for that measure after his election proved that his antislavery views had not abated. Near the end of his life, he repeated in a public speech one of his favorite arguments against slavery: "Whenever [I] hear any one, arguing for slavery I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. This Indianapolis edition of the Emancipation Proclamation, published in 1886, obviously copied the edition in Figure 2. Note, however, that the harsher scenes of slavery are removed — a sign of the post-Reconstruction political ethos.

OPINION/ESSAYS

Emancipation was the central decision of his presidency, and he came to it gradually, through the logic of events

How Lincoln Finally Made Up His Mind



DWIGHT STURGES

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd
And the great star droop'd in the western sky in the night
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.
– From Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"

By Donald E. Harpster

ONE hundred and 32 years ago this April 14, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Since then, he has been immortalized in poetry, prose, history textbooks, and myth. As our own leaders strive to find their place in history, it's instructive to look back at the things that influenced this great president and how he tried to find an answer to the most perplexing and divisive question of his day – what to do about slavery. The portrait that emerges is one of a man deeply influenced by his religious convictions, his understanding of equality, and a faith in the overarching providence of God to work His will through tragic circumstances.

Lincoln was consistent in his belief that slavery was a moral wrong and that the Negro was an equal to the white man. Both these beliefs were rooted in his religious convictions. Slavery, he had written as early as 1837, was "founded both on injustice and bad policy." In a letter dated May 30, 1864, to a Committee from the American Baptist Home Mission Society, Lincoln quoted the Bible: "In the sweat of thy face thou shall eat bread." Because slavery was a shifting of the burden of labor, he reasoned, it was wrong.

More complex, however, was his belief in the idea that divine Providence worked His will through human tragedy. In 1862, he wrote: "The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war, it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are the best adaptation to effect his purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true; that God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By his mere great power on the minds of the now contestants, he could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun, he could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds."

Both sides read the Bible

In his second inaugural address in March of 1865, he expanded on this notion of divine will by speaking of both Confederate and Union partisans: "Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered – that of neither has been answered fully."

Yet despite these eloquent and complicated beliefs, Lincoln was a "politician of the possible" rather than the radical reformer he is so often portrayed to have been. Although he believed slavery was morally wrong, he once envisioned a program of gradual, compensated emancipation with the consent of slave owners. This would have stretched over a generation or more, with provision for the colonization abroad of emancipated slaves to minimize the potential for racial conflict and social disorder. In 1861, he hosted members of the American Colonization Society at the White House and declared support for the society's position, declaring that African-Americans should be sent back to their ancestral homeland.

After becoming president, in fact, Lincoln promised not to interfere with slavery in established Southern states. When the fighting commenced, he seemed to move with indecisive steps toward emancipation. His only war aim, he claimed well into the spring of 1862, was to save the Union. When Gen. John C. Fremont, then heading federal military operations in Missouri, declared an end to slavery in that state in August 1861, Lincoln not only rescinded the proclamation but removed Fremont from command.

Lincoln held back in resolving the emancipation question for many reasons. First, he did not want to drive slave-holding border states into the Confederacy.

Second, he worried about pervasive racism; white Northerners had willingly taken up arms to save the Union, but he wondered whether they would keep fighting to liberate the black population.

Third, if he moved too fast, he reasoned, he might lose everything – including the Union itself – should Northern peace advocates seize upon popular fears of emancipation and create an overwhelming demand to stop the fighting in favor of Southern independence.

Fourth, he had personal doubts as to whether blacks and whites could ever live together in freedom.

By the summer of 1862, Lincoln finally had made up his mind. The death toll, he reasoned, had become too great. All the maiming and killing had to have some larger purpose, transcending the primary war aim of preserving the Union. For Lincoln, the military contest had become a test to see whether the republic had the capacity to live up to the ideals of the American Revolution.

Nevertheless, Lincoln knew he was gambling with Northern morale at a time when Union victories were all but nonexistent, when enlistments were in decline, and when war weariness had set in. He was aware that racists would spread their poison. So the president waited for the right moment, such as after an important battlefield triumph, to quiet his critics who would surely say that emancipation was a desperate measure designed to cover up presidential mismanagement of the war.

As a shrewd politician, Lincoln began to prepare white Northerners for what was coming. He explained to readers of Horace Greeley's New York Tribune: "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that."

A critical battlefield victory

On Sept. 22, 1862, five days after the Battle of Antietam, Lincoln announced his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which called upon Southerners to lay down their arms and return to the Union by year's end or to accept the abolition of slavery. Getting no formal response, on Jan. 1, 1863, he declared all slaves in the Confederacy "forever free." The final document called emancipation "an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity." Out of necessity too, slavery could continue to exist in the four Union border states – to assure a united front against the rebels.

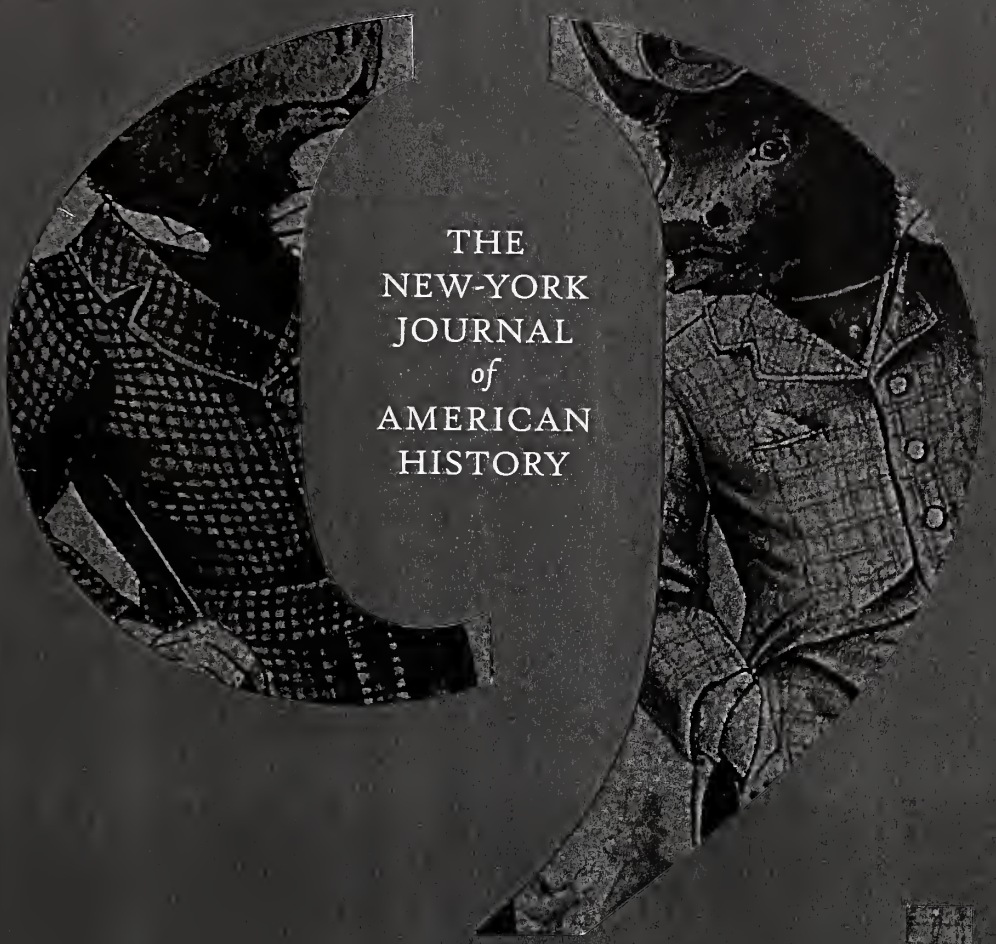
In private, Lincoln referred to the horrible carnage at Antietam as "an indication of Divine will" that had forever "decided the question" of emancipation "in favor of the slaves."

Although Lincoln's personal position regarding slavery was always consistent, it was the unfolding events of the war and his interpretation of those events based largely on his religious faith that led to greater and wider action to eliminate what was to him a great moral evil in the life of the Republic.

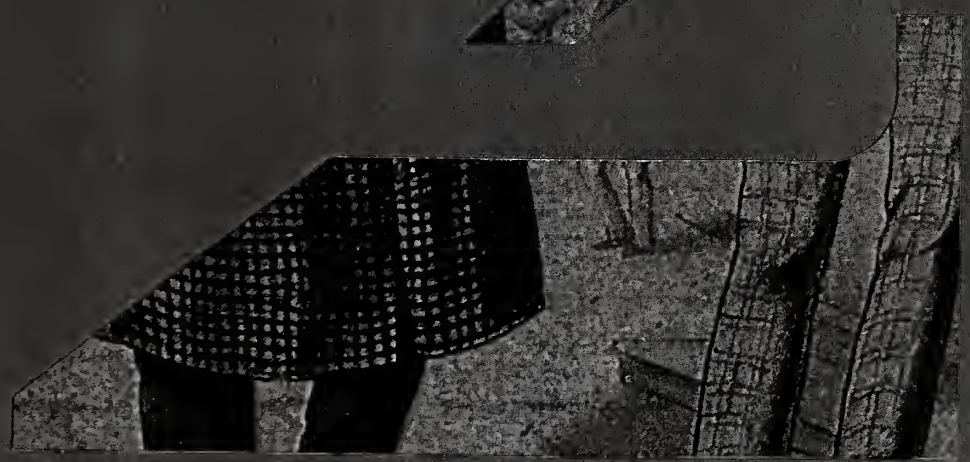
■ *Donald E. Harpster is an associate professor of history and political science at the College of St. Joseph in Rutland, Vt.*

EDITOR'S NOTE: What do you think of our new type, Bookman Medium? We've used it for today's Opinion/Essays page. Please let us know by mail: John Dillin, TCSM, One Norway St., Boston, MA 02115, or e-mail: dillinj@csps.com

FALL 2003



THE NEW-YORK JOURNAL *of* AMERICAN HISTORY



FORMERLY THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Treasures from the Gilder Lehrman Collection

LINCOLN ON THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Allen C. Guelzo

"That man who thinks Lincoln calmly sat down and gathered his robes about him, waiting for the people to call him, has a very erroneous knowledge of Lincoln," wrote Abraham Lincoln's long-time law partner, William Henry Herndon. "He was always calculating, and always planning ahead. His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest."[1] And in no other pursuit was Lincoln more ambitious than in politics. As a lawyer and Whig political organizer in Illinois, "Politics were his life and his ambition his motive power."[2]

But at the same time, ambition in politics was regarded with deep suspicion in Lincoln's America. Our experiment in republican self-government was still a fragile one, and without the artificial restraints of aristocracy or class, Americans feared that ambition could easily run amok. Even Lincoln agreed that, as the example of the Founding Fathers drifted into the past, "men of sufficient talent and ambition will not be wanting to seize the opportunity, strike the blow, and overturn" the American republic. "Towering genius disdains a beaten path," he cautioned. "Is it unreasonable then to expect, that some man possessed of the loftiest genius, coupled with ambition sufficient to push it to its utmost stretch, will at some time, spring up among us?"[3]

"That glorious consummation, which my own poor eyes may not last to see."

The question in Lincoln's mind was whether ambition always needed to be so fatally self-serving. Ambition, he would write years later, "within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm."[4] What he needed was a stage on which to test the quality of his ambition—and in 1858, as the national controversy over the extension of

slavery boiled to life, he found it in his challenge to Stephen A. Douglas for the U.S. Senate.

At the beginning of that campaign, Lincoln took the trouble to write out a note on the subject of ambition and its aims, the note which is reproduced here. This fragment was dated to the summer of the Lincoln-Douglas campaign by Robert Todd Lincoln, who explained when he presented the manuscript to the Duchess of St. Albans as a gift in 1892 that it was "made in preparing for one of the speeches in the joint-debate Campaign between Mr. Douglas & my father in 1858."[5]

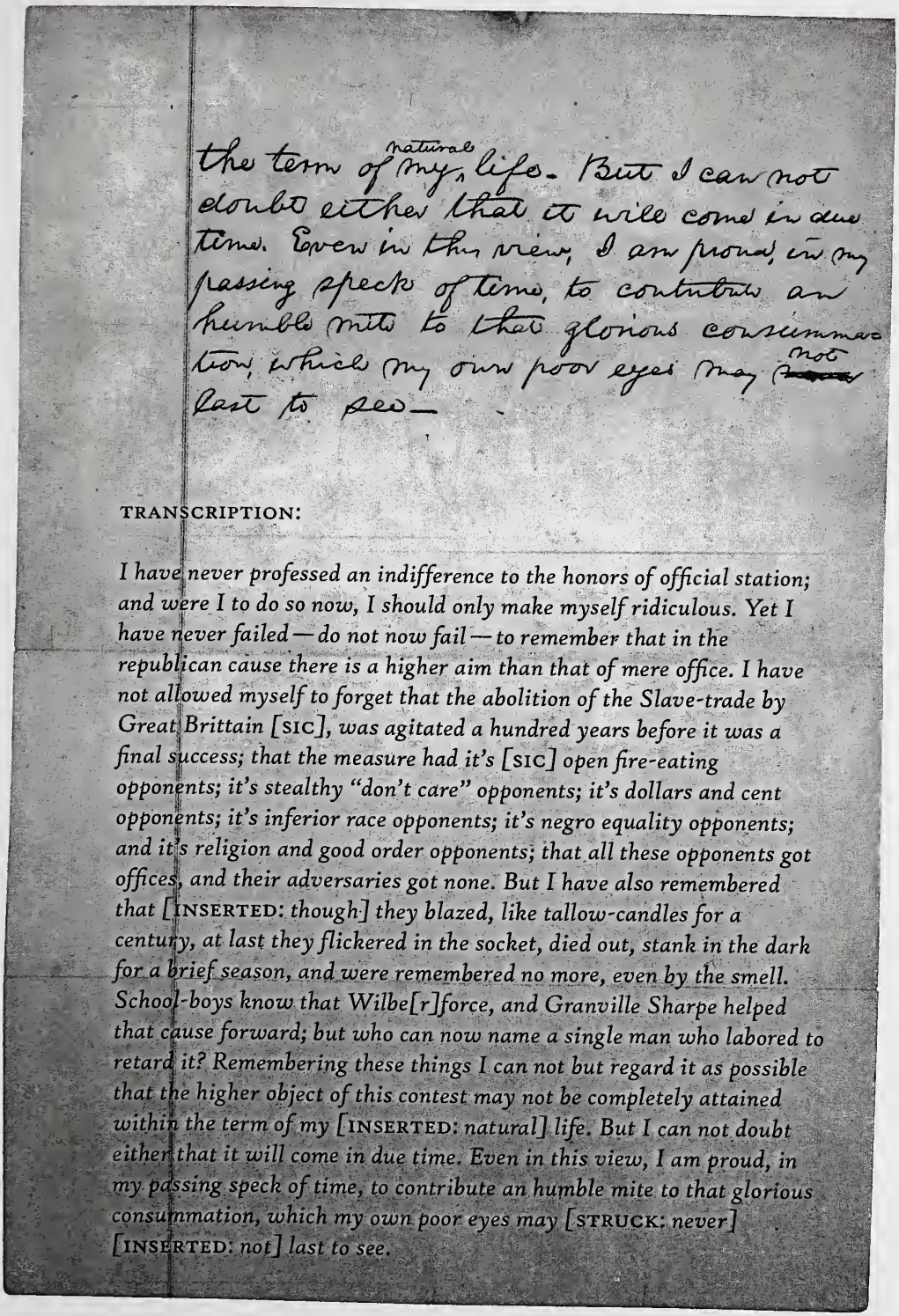
The text begins with Lincoln's acknowledgment that "I have never professed an indifference to the honors of official station." He had always been ambitious for political office and political success, and any attempt to make himself look otherwise would "only make myself ridiculous." But ambition could also rise to nobler levels. "In the republican cause there is a higher aim than that of mere office." After all, if ambition could be satisfied with "mere office," Lincoln could have had it by less risky means than embracing the anti-slavery movement.

The proof of that argument was in the historical pudding. Pointing to the British anti-slavery movement, Lincoln noted that the "mere" office-seekers had routinely opposed emancipation. This included emancipation's "open fire-eating opponents; it's [SIC] stealthy 'don't care' opponents; it's dollars and cent opponents; it's inferior race opponents; it's negro equality opponents; and it's religion and good order opponents." All of these, Lincoln notes wryly, "got offices, and their adversaries got none." But thirty years after the triumph of abolition in the British empire, who was remembered? "School-boys know that Wilberforce, and Granville Sharpe"—two of Britain's most devoted and tenacious enemies of slavery—"helped that cause forward; but who can now name a single man who labored to retard it?"

Abraham Lincoln, speech fragment, autograph manuscript, July 1858. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, New York, NY (GLC 5302).

Ambition on the part of its citizens is the mark of a society willing to allow talent and ingenuity to rise. But ambition must not, as Joseph Conrad once wrote, "climb upwards on the miseries or credulities of mankind."[6] In the last speech of the 1858 campaign, Lincoln admitted that "Ambition has been ascribed to me." That was true, and "I claim no insensibility to political honors." But he was laboring for a greater end than "political honors." If slavery could be restricted once and for all by electing Douglas, "on principle, I would, in consideration, gladly agree, that Judge Douglas should never be out, and I never in, an office, so long as we both or either, live."[7]

I have never professed an indifference to the honors of official station; and were I to do so now, I should only make myself ridiculous. Yet I have never failed — do not now fail — to remember that in the republican cause there is a higher aim than that of mere office. I have not allowed myself to forget that the abolition of the Slave-trade by Great Britain, was agitated a hundred years before it was a final success; that the measure had its open fire-eating opponents; its stealthy "dont care" opponents; its dollar and cent opponents; its inferior race opponents; its negro equality opponents; and its religion and good order opponents; that all these opponents got offices, and their adversaries got none. But I have also remembered that though they blazed like tallow-candles for a century, at last they flickered in the socket, died out, stank in the dark for a brief season, and were remembered no more, even by the smell. School-boys know that Wilberforce, and Granville Sharpe, helped that cause forward; but who can now name a single man who labored to retard it? Remembering these things I can not but regard it as possible that the higher objects of this contest may not be completely attained within


the term of my natural life. But I can not
doubt either that it will come in due
time. Even in this view, I am proud, in my
passing speck of time, to contribute an
humble mite to that glorious consumma-
tion, which my own poor eyes may not
[illegible] last to see—

TRANSCRIPTION:

I have never professed an indifference to the honors of official station; and were I to do so now, I should only make myself ridiculous. Yet I have never failed — do not now fail — to remember that in the republican cause there is a higher aim than that of mere office. I have not allowed myself to forget that the abolition of the Slave-trade by Great Brittain [SIC], *was agitated a hundred years before it was a final success; that the measure had it's* [SIC] *open fire-eating opponents; it's stealthy "don't care" opponents; it's dollars and cent opponents; it's inferior race opponents; it's negro equality opponents; and it's religion and good order opponents; that all these opponents got offices, and their adversaries got none. But I have also remembered that* [INSERTED: *though*] *they blazed, like tallow-candles for a century, at last they flickered in the socket, died out, stank in the dark for a brief season, and were remembered no more, even by the smell. School-boys know that Wilbe[r]force, and Granville Sharpe helped that cause forward; but who can now name a single man who labored to retard it? Remembering these things I can not but regard it as possible that the higher object of this contest may not be completely attained within the term of my* [INSERTED: *natural*] *life. But I can not doubt either that it will come in due time. Even in this view, I am proud, in my passing speck of time, to contribute an humble mite to that glorious consummation, which my own poor eyes may* [STRUCK: *never*] [INSERTED: *not*] *last to see.*

Lincoln knew how large a role ambition played in his own character, and how indispensable ambition was to the success of a nation without titled privilege or "fixed condition." But he also understood how necessary it was to the survival of popular government that ambition become the servant, not the master. "The proudest ambition he could desire was to do something for the elevation of the condition of his fellowman," he told an acquaintance, shortly before departing for Gettysburg to deliver his famous address.[8] And few who knew Lincoln doubted the sincerity with which he said it. "He had a desire of power," wrote Charles Zane, the Springfield newspaper editor, "but it was that he might in the use of it benefit his fellow men."[9] Ambition was Lincoln's "humble mite" as well as his "little engine," and it provided the fuel which led, against all his expectations in 1858, to "that glorious consummation" of liberty and equality for all Americans.

ALLEN C. GUELZO is the Grace F. Kea Professor of American History at Eastern College, where he is also Dean of the Templeton Honors College.

NOTES

1. William Henry Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Life of Lincoln: The History and Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Paul M. Angle (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1942), 34.

2. Emanuel Hertz, ed., *The Hidden Lincoln: From the Letters and Papers of William H. Herndon* (New York: Viking Press, 1938), 116.

3. Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), I: 111-12, 114.

4. Ibid., 6: 78.

5. Ibid., 2: 482.

6. Joseph Conrad, *A Personal Record* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1912), 12.

7. Basler, 3: 334.

8. Ibid., 7: 13.

9. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, eds., *Herndon's Informants: Letters, Interviews and Statements about Abraham Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 489.

Books

Michael Burlingame: Review of Richard Striner's Father Abraham: Lincoln's Relentless Struggle to End Slavery (Oxford)

Source: *Weekly Standard* (4-3-06)

[Michael Burlingame is the author, most recently, of The Inner World of Abraham Lincoln.]

Eric Foner's *Give Me Liberty!*
"I especially love the themes that are raised concerning people outside the elites. The differing conceptions of liberty and freedom are very important for an understanding of US history."
Leslie V. Tischauser, *Prarie State College*

IN THIS ESTIMABLE VOLUME, Richard Striner effectively demolishes the fashionable myths of Lincoln the Reluctant Emancipator and Lincoln the White Supremacist. Deeply committed to the antislavery cause, the sixteenth president was, as Striner persuasively argues, "a fervent idealist" and "an artist in the Machiavellian uses of power."

Lincoln loathed and despised slavery early on. "I have always hated slavery I think as much as any abolitionist," he declared during his unsuccessful quest for a Senate seat in 1858. Six years later, as he prepared his bid for a second term in the White House, he wrote a public letter avowing "I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think, and feel."

But Lincoln also revered the Constitution and felt bound to abide by it, even the odious fugitive slave clause. To his best friend, Kentucky slaveholder Joshua Speed, he confided in 1855: "I . . . acknowledge your rights and my obligations, under the constitution, in regard to your slaves. I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down, and caught, and carried back to their stripes, and unrewarded toils; but I bite my lip and keep quiet." That sight was "a continual torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave-border. It is hardly fair for you to assume, that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings, in order to maintain their loyalty to the constitution and the Union."

As president, Lincoln would have issued the Emancipation Proclamation much earlier than he did if he had acted on his own wishes. But he felt bound by his oath of office to uphold the Constitution, which meant preserving the Union. If he moved prematurely, he rightly feared driving some or all of the loyal slave states (Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware) into the arms of the Confederacy, and thus losing the war. Only when those states were securely cemented to the Union did he announce the emancipation policy. Critics who accuse Lincoln of being soft on slavery denounce the pragmatic justification of military necessity he

gave for taking that step. But as he cogently explained, the only constitutional ground for ordering emancipation was his authority under the war power. Because emancipation was legitimate as a measure for undermining the Confederacy, he restricted the scope of the proclamation to those areas still in rebellion. Exempt were the Border States and parts of the Confederacy occupied by Union forces. Greasing the skids for the proclamation, Lincoln wrote a public letter a month before its issuance that, as Striner emphasizes, has been widely misunderstood:

> My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. . . . I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men every where could be free.

This letter was not a definitive statement of Lincoln's innermost feelings about the aims of the war but, rather, a political utterance designed to smooth the way for the proclamation, which he had already written and intended to promulgate as soon as the Union army won a major victory. He knew full well that millions of northerners and border state residents would object to transforming the war into an abolitionist crusade. They were willing to fight to preserve the Union but not to free the slaves. As president, Lincoln had to make the mighty act of emancipation palatable to them. By assuring conservatives that emancipation was simply a means to preserve the Union, Lincoln hoped to minimize the white backlash that he knew would come.

Lincoln feared that his proclamation might not stand up in court. Striner shows that the president worked assiduously behind the scenes to reconstruct Confederate states during the war as Union forces penetrated ever deeper southward. His Ten Percent plan, which enabled a state to resume good standing in the Union if one-tenth of its eligible electorate took a loyalty oath, represented no abandonment of blacks, as critics charged. Lincoln wanted white southerners in the reconstructed states to abolish slavery through their legislatures, which the Constitution did not forbid. Moreover, he knew that white backlash would be diminished if emancipation were decreed by their own state governments rather than by the federal government.

When that strategy fizzled, Lincoln vigorously supported a measure guaranteeing freedom to all slaves that no court could undo: a constitutional amendment. Using his powers of persuasion, he cajoled Congress to pass the Thirteenth Amendment, which finally did abolish slavery throughout the nation.

Once slavery was abolished, Lincoln wanted the liberated blacks to enjoy real freedom. To that end he signed legislation establishing a Freedmen's Bureau, which Striner rightly characterizes as "an unprecedented social welfare agency." In addition, the president publicly endorsed limited black suffrage in an important speech two days after Robert E. Lee surrendered. His recommendation applied to tens of thousands of black veterans of the Union army as well as "very intelligent"

black men.

That speech cost Lincoln his life, for John Wilkes Booth was in the audience and declared to companions who would help him assassinate the president three days later, "That means nigger citizenship. Now, by God, I'll put him through. That is the last speech he will ever make." And so it was. Thus, Lincoln was a martyr to black civil rights as much as Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers.

Striner's treatment of Lincoln's pre-presidential years focuses on the period 1854-61. In dealing with the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, Striner notes that it "is easy enough to view Lincoln in a very bad light by our contemporary standards." But he correctly points out that Lincoln's statements that grate most harshly on modern ears (opposing black citizenship rights) were "a defense against the crude demagoguery of Douglas." Douglas, like many of his Democratic colleagues, engaged in shameless race-baiting, compared with which Lincoln's reservations about black equality seem mild. Lincoln argued that the question of black citizenship was a red herring, that the real issue before the public was slavery. Republicans believed slavery was wrong and should not be allowed to expand; Democrats did not believe slavery was wrong and would allow it to expand.

Memorably, Lincoln declared in the final debate:

> That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles--right and wrong--throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the 'divine right of kings.' It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, 'You work and toil and earn bread, and I'll eat it.' No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle.

Striner makes his case well, skillfully utilizing the work of such fine historians as James M. McPherson, LaWanda Cox, Harry V. Jaffa, and William Lee Miller. He could have strengthened his argument by citing defenses of Lincoln by thoroughgoing abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison and Owen Lovejoy. But he does quote Frederick Douglass's too-little-known 1865 speech in which the black orator called Lincoln "emphatically the black man's president, the first to show any respect for their rights as men."

Striner's readable account is not aimed at specialists, who will discover little new in it, but at the general reader, who will be impressed by the relentless way the author shows how relentless was Lincoln's struggle to end slavery.

Posted on Thursday, March 30, 2006 at 7:40 PM | Comments (4) | Return

The Register Citizen (registercitizen.com), Serving Torrington, CT

News

Lincoln's nuanced view of slavery explained by renowned historian

Thursday, August 9, 2012

By MICHELLE MERLIN
Register Citizen Staff
mmerlin@registercitizen.com

LITCHFIELD — Abraham Lincoln has a post-mortem identity crisis. He's been called an abolitionist, a racist, an atheist, a deeply religious man, a conservative, a liberal and, most recently, a vampire hunter.

American historian Eric Foner attempted to set the record straight at Oliver Wolcott Library Thursday, in a lecture based off his book, "The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery." The book won the Bancroft Prize, Pulitzer Prize for History, and The Lincoln Prize.

Foner said that Lincoln's feelings about race are difficult to pin down in part because they were constantly evolving and because Lincoln had relatively few correspondences and kept no journal.

Foner is certain that Lincoln was no abolitionist.

"Lincoln was a politician, he was not an agitator like the abolitionists," said Foner.

Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States who led the country through the Civil War and issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves in some southern states. He was the first president to be assassinated.

Foner said the goal of his book was to place Lincoln on the spectrum of the anti-slavery movement, which ranged from radical abolitionists who believed slaves should be freed immediately and given all the rights of citizens, to other abolitionists who believed in a more gradual emancipation, to others who believed in freeing the slaves and colonizing them.

But for abolitionists, Foner said, slavery was an overwhelmingly moral issue, which was not the case for most of Lincoln's life.

"[Lincoln thought] that's why slavery is so evil because makes us into hypocritical nation," said Foner. But unlike some radical abolitionists, Lincoln wanted to abide by the Constitution.

Foner explained that in the beginning of Lincoln's career as a politician in Illinois, he was a member of the Whig Party who focused mostly on economic issues and not slavery.

As Western expansion of slavery became an issue, Lincoln began to talk about slavery in purely economic terms.

"Essentially what Lincoln said is slavery is a form of theft, the theft of labor, one person stealing another person's labor

without that person's permission," said Foner.

Once the Whig Party dissolved, Lincoln became a vocal member of the Republican Party, renowned for his oratory skills, Foner said.

Because of his belief that slavery was theft, Democrats accused Lincoln of supporting "Negro equality" — something Foner equated with being accused of being a communist in the 1950's.

"Lincoln said, 'no I do not believe in Negro equality, but I do believe in the natural right to eat the bread you earn with your own hands,'" said Foner.

Throughout the 1850's and two years into the Civil War, Lincoln believed in gradual emancipation and colonization.

"The key about colonization is it enabled people to talk about getting rid of slavery without confronting issue of race," said Foner. During this time, Foner says, Lincoln could not conceive of a nation in which blacks and whites lived together.

"On racism he's kind of agnostic. It's just a fact of life. That's why he's for colonization..because he thinks racism is so deeply embedded in American life," said Foner.

Lincoln started to talk about the "ultimate extinction" of slavery, Foner says, which made southern states nervous and triggered the Civil War.

When the war started, Lincoln tried to talk the border states (those which had slavery, but had not seceded) to agree with his plan in which slaves would be freed but their owners would be financially compensated by the government.

He also invited blacks to the White House — he was the first president to do so — to ask them to comply with his idea of colonization.

"All border states say forget it," said Foner. "[Blacks] say, 'we're not interested, we are Americans.'"

When support for the war waned, Lincoln knew he had to make it more about slavery. He allowed blacks to enlist in the army, an action that served as a catalyst for Lincoln's thinking.

"Lincoln comes to believe that by dying and fighting for the nation, black people have staked a claim to citizenship," said Foner.

Foner also talked about the Emancipation Proclamation.

"People read the Emancipation Proclamation and they're sometimes disappointed because it doesn't talk about the rights of mankind," said Foner. "It's important because it links the union war effort to the abolition of slavery...and says now it's a task of the army to protect the freedom of those slaves."

Lincoln's second inaugural address showed his changing views of slavery and race.

"What he's telling the nation is that the terrible violence of the Civil War has been preceded by 250 years of the terrible violence of slavery," said Foner. "In essence Lincoln is using this speech to ask the nation to confront the legacy of slavery."

In the end, Foner says, Lincoln was killed before his thoughts on slavery and race could fully mature.

Foner is the DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University.

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URL: http://www.registercitizen.com/articles/2012/08/09/news/doc50247417beb87215823313.prt

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Lincoln and Slavery.

It has frequently been asserted that during the first half of his life Abraham Lincoln was, like thousands of others, tolerant of slavery. According to his last biographer, the late Isaac N. Arnold, this is a mistake. At a very early age he began to regard slavery with passionate detestation, though, like every other sober observer, he was long unable to discern any practical method of suppressing it. There is a tradition, which apparently dates back to 1831, but which Mr. Arnold does not vouch for, that on the visit which he paid in that year to New Orleans, as a deck hand on a flatboat, Lincoln and his companion visited an old fortune teller, a Voudou negress. The legend has it that during the interview the prophetess became intensely excited, and, poring over Lincoln's hand, cried out: "This man here will be President, and tell all us colored folks go free." It seems to be certain that this visit made Lincoln an anti-slavery man. "He saw a slave, a beautiful mulatto girl, sold at auction; she was felt over, pinched, trotted around to show the bidders that said article was sound, etc. Lincoln walked away from the sad, inhuman scene with a deep feeling of unsmotherable hate. He said to his companion, 'By God, if ever I get a chance to hit that institution, I'll hit it hard.'" That he made this speech there is no doubt, and his demeanor on his journey homeward made a deep impression on his companions. They remember that he was, by turns, "mad, thoughtful, abstracted, sad and depressed."

Lincoln's Policy Toward Slavery and the South. Such was the situation when Lincoln became President on March 4, 1861. It was one of the most trying times in the history of the country. Lincoln was not very well known to the people and there was much anxiety as to what he would do. He was not an abolitionist, although he was an anti-slavery man. He said to John Hanks, when on a flatboat trip to New Orleans in 1831, where they had been witnesses of a slave market, "If ever I get a chance to hit slavery, I'll hit it hard." As we know, the chance came to him in 1863, when he gave slavery its death-blow. But when he became President he did not intend to interfere with slavery



LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE[1]

[1] In such a poor and lowly cabin, in Hardin County, Ky., Abraham Lincoln was born, Feb. 12, 1809. Lincoln's grandfather came from Virginia about 1781. A year or two later he was killed by the Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, while he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. Lincoln's father grew up without education. He moved to Spencer County, Indiana, when the boy Abe was only seven years old, the year Indiana came into the Union (1816). It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There Lincoln grew up. There were some schools, so-called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond "readin', writin', and cipherin' to the rule of three." In early manhood Lincoln moved to Illinois and studied law. At various times he was flatboatman, rail-splitter, storekeeper, postmaster in a small village, captain of volunteers in the Black Hawk Indian War, and member of the Illinois legislature. In 1846 he was elected to Congress but was not a candidate for reëlection. In politics he was a Whig, a follower of Henry Clay. He was losing his interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854 aroused him again. He then came to the front as a Republican leader. From then until his tragic death his life became a part of his country's history.

From that humble cabin Lincoln rose to a fame that has gone throughout the world. He touched the hearts of the people because, amid burdens and cares such as no President before him had ever borne, the great leader could yet so often turn aside to do some deed of personal loving kindness. The children of America should learn to look upon the picture of his kindly face with reverence. They should allow his work and words to influence their lives, that they may become men and women who, like Lincoln, will be living forces for good citizenship among all the people.

Very first printing of Abraham Lincoln
From Dave Keiser Elkins
Park, Pennsylvania

Tons. Enquire for the ſaid *Searle* at the Houſe of *Benjamin Morgan* in *King-ſtreet*.

RUN away on the 13th of *September* laſt from *Abraham Lincoln* of *Springfield* in the County of *Cheſter*, a Negro Man named *Jack*, about 30 Years of Age, low Stature, ſpeaks little or no *Engliſh*, has a Scar by the Corner of one Eye, in the Form of a V, his Teeth notched, and the Top of one of his Fore Teeth broke: He had on when he went away an old Hat, a grey Jacket partly like a Sailor's Jacket. Whoever ſecures the ſaid Negro, and brings him to his Maſter, or to *Mordecai Lincoln* living among the Upper Inhabitants on *Skuylkill*, or to *William Branſon* in *Philadelphia*, ſhall have *Twenty Shillings* Reward and reaſonable Charges.

STOLEN from on board the *London*

TRANSCRIPT GLC 3251

Abraham Lincoln. Autograph manuscript: [Springfield?], [*ca.* 1857-1859]. 1 p. Fragmentary manuscript, probably part of a speech.

[*the beginning is lacking*]

dent truth. Made so plain by our good Father in Heaven, that all feel and understand it, even down to brutes and creeping insects. The ant, who has toiled and dragged a crumb to his nest, will furiously defend the fruit of his labor, against whatever robber assails him. So plain, that the most dumb and stupid slave that ever toiled for a master, does constantly know that he is wronged. So plain that no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in a plainly selfish way; for although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself.

Most governments have been based, practically, on the denial of equal rights of men, as I have, in part, stated them; ours began, by affirming those rights. They said, some men are too ignorant, and vicious, to share in government. Possibly so, said we; and, by your system, you would always keep them ignorant and vicious. We proposed to give all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant, wiser; and all better, and happier together.

We made the experiment; and the fruit is before us. Look at it. Think of it. Look at it, in its aggregate grandeur, of extent of country, and numbers of population, of ship, and steamboat, and rail-<road.>

[*the end is lacking*]

Notes: Basler 2: 222, who dates the manuscript in July 1854, an arbitrary date from Nicolay-Hay, at the time of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Basler suggests a more probable date of 1858-1859, when Lincoln re-entered politics. That these words are fundamental to Lincoln's opposition to slavery is underscored by his use of them again when signing an autograph book in March 1864 (Basler 7: 260) and once more when speaking to the 140th Indiana Volunteers in March 1865 (Basler 8: 361).

dent truth— Made so plain by our good Father in Heaven, that all feel and understand it, even down to brutes and creeping insects— The ant, who has toiled and dragged a crumb to his nest, will furiously defend the fruit of his labor, against whatever robber assails him— So plain, that the most dumb and stupid slave that ever toiled for a master, does constantly know that he is wronged— So plain that no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in a plainly selfish way; for although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself—

Most governments have been based, practically, on the denial of the equal rights of men, as I have, in part, stated them; Ours began by affirming those rights— They said, some men are too ignorant, and vicious, to share in government— Possibly so, said we; and, by your system, you would always keep them ignorant, and vicious— We proposed to give all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant, wiser; and all better, and happier together—

We made the experiment; and the fruit is before us— Look at it— think of it— Look at it, in its aggregate grandeur, of extent of country, and number of population— of ships, and steamboat, and rail-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Autograph manuscript fragment. [1857-1858 ca.] GLC 3251. Fragment on slavery and American government. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library.

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DUPLICATE

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE SLAVERY STATUS

" I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong, I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel" A.Lincoln
Letter to A.G.Hodges,Frankfort,Ky. dated Apr.4,1864

Extract

If there was never a time in his life when Abraham Lincoln did not think and feel that slavery was wrong,his parents must have been responsible for some of his earliest impressions of the system. At the time Lincoln was born So.Fork Church but two miles from the cabin where he first saw the light was practically closedon acount of the slavery agitation.Less than six months before his birth fifteen members of the South Fork Church had left the organization "on account of Slavery".During the two years the Lincolns lived on the South Fork no business sessions of the church were held ,the pastor himself having gone out from them, because of his views on emancipation.

The Slavery Status ~~of~~ 2

The Lincolns and Slavery

We are sure of this fact that Thomas Lincoln father of Abraham Lincoln was not a slave owner. We are equally positive that Abraham Lincoln Sr., father of Thomas and Grandfather of the President was not a slave holder. ~~Those who have traced~~ the lineage of the Lincolns have not been able to discover any of the Lincolns of the direct ancestral line who held slaves as property. ~~Abraham Lincoln, Sr., with his brother~~ Thomas migrated to Kentucky and Isaac ~~another brother~~ migrated to Tenneessee. ~~We find that~~ both Thomas and Isaac were slave ~~lords~~, but Abraham was financially able to own slaves and had several large tracts of land where he could have worked them, for some reason did not own a single one. When the inventory of his estate was recorded no slaves were listed.

His service in the revolutionary war may have had something to do in forming an opinion adverse to slavery, as many were able to see the inconsistency of the attitude taken towards the slave after having gained their own independence. Of the three sons of Abraham Lincoln Sr. ~~Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas~~. Mordecai was the only one who ever owned a slave and then he listed but one ~~on the commissioners books in~~ 1803.* This slave may have been a gift to his wife from her father, as each slave owning parent ~~tried to give~~ each of his daughters, at least one servant to help about the house. This slave was not listed by Mordecai until after Thomas left Washington County for Hardin County.

(8)

During the visit of Thomas Lincoln to his Uncle Isaac in Tennesee, he came in direct contact with slavery. ~~Tradition says that he was there a year or two, and the tax reports of Washington County seem to support this tradition~~ Just how many slaves his Uncle Isaac owned at the time he made the visit we are unable to say. When Isaac died in 1816 he left his property to his wife Mary. In 1834 Mary died and bequeathed forty thres slaves to her relatives.* ~~This trip to Tennesee at an impressionable age may have had more to do with the inherant tendancy of his son than we are willing to admit.~~

Thomas Lincoln, the other Uncle who lived near Lexington, and for whom Thomas the father of the President was named, owned as many as six slaves at one time. He lived in a community where most of the land owners were wealthy, and much of their wealth was being created by slave labor.

One other earlyiexperience of Thomas might be registered here. In 1797 he went to Elizabethtown, probably to visit his grandfathers cousin Hananiah Lincoln, who lived near the town. While here Thomas secured a job working on a raceway and mill dam, ~~that was being~~ constructed by Haycraft and Berry. In the several months that he labored herehe was thrown in constant contact with negroes who worked on the project . ~~The masters of these slaves who worked from day to day received~~ No pay ~~for their labor.~~ their masters collecting their earnings.* This may have set Thomas Lincoln to thinking about the problem, as he too was a laborer.

The Hankses and Slavery

We must admit that few of the Hanks families were in a position to own slaves if they had so desired. Joseph Hanks, the grandfather of Nancy evidently was not a slave holder as none are mentioned in his will. A branch of the Hanks family that settled in Woodford County not far from the Washington and Mercer County community in the same neighborhood where the Sparrows lived, among these there was Elijah Hanks and his wife who were opposed to slavery as we learn from a deed by which they conveyed a tract of land to an emancipation church. A portion of this deed follows: "Whereas certain persons whose names are known to the said Elijah Hanks and Winifred his wife did in the year 1806 on the thirtieth day of July institute and declarethemselves a society under the title of the Baptized Church of Christ holding that perpetual slavery is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ....." * It is evident that they were among the organizers of this church and the property they conveyed was to be used by the above mentioned society.

In the same County, however, another member of the George Hanks family was a possessor of slaves. This was George Hanks, already mentioned in the chapter on the Hanks ancestry and whose wife was named Lucy. At a sale held in December, 1802 George purchased a negro boy named Sam and paid $ 35.00 for him.* That same year he listed three slaves for taxation.* In Clark County another branch of the Hanks family settled. They were probably descendants of Abraham Hanks. In the year 1792 Absolem Hanks of Clark County listed one slave, but by the year 1820 the number of his slaves

The Slavery Status #4

had increased to thirteen.* We might say however, that it (14)
is very seldom we find a Hanks family that owned slaves.

If we can accept the tradition that Nancy Hanks was brought up by the Berrys we are sure that ther e was at least one colored servant about the house, who was listed as a slave.* (15)
In the year she was married ,1806, Edward Berry, the youngest son of the senior Richard listed as many as six slaves. We have * (9)
evidence that many of the Berry's neighbors also owned slaves .* (16)

We doubt very much, however, that family or community conditions exerted very much influence on the lives of either Thomas or Nancy Lincoln previous to date of their marriage in 1806.

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Personal Influences

Professor T.C. Graham who prepared the biographical sketch of Thomas Lincoln now engraved on a marble slab placed on the interior walls of the Lincoln Memorial Building at Hodgenville, Ky. has this to say about the anti-slavery influence of Jesse Head. " Reverend Jesse Head, the minister who married Tom Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, talked boldly againsy slavery and Tom and Nancy Lincoln and Sarah Bush were just steeped full of Jesse Head's notions. " (38)

It is doubtful if Sarah Bush ever saw Jesse Head, and the Lincolns were to say nothing of hearing him preach on slavery or any other subject. The fact is the Heads were slave holders. Edward Head living on Beech Fork no far from the Lincolns listed four slaves in 1797.* (39) Bigger Head who died in 1799 besides other property left to his widow Priscilla two negroes.* (40) Rev. Jesse was also a slave holder. In 1803 in Washington County he listed three slaves and as far as we have been able to follow him through the commissioners books of Washington and Mercer County, from this date until the year 1822 he was not without at least one slave. * (41) 10

If Thomas Lincoln heard Jesse Head preach against slavery before 1803 when he left Washington County for Hardin, he probably thought that Jesse was not practicing what he preached.

The Slavery Status 15 16

It has been difficult to harmonize the attitude of Jesse Head towards the owner of slaves and the affirmation of Peter Cartwright one of the pioneer Methodist preachers. Cartwright says that " a traveling preacher was the owner of a slave, he was obliged to record a bill of emancipation." * As Jesse (42) was only a Deacon it may have allowed him certain privileges the itinerant did not have. We can come to this conclusion, however, that Jesse Head did not exert any influence over Thomas Lincoln, Nancy HanksLincoln or Sarah Bush Lincoln with respect to slavery.

If we were to select one preacher in Kentucky who possibly influenced individually ; with respect to slavery, three whose slavery agitation influenced possibly generations of Lincolns we would name Joshua Carmen. Col. R.T. Durrett in the sketch of " Ancient Louisville" is the first to record the presence of Rev. Joshua Carmen in Kentucky. Durrett He locates Carmen in Louisville as early as 1783 and refers to him as one of the early preachers at the Falls of the Ohio. On June 23,1787 " Brother Carmen was called as a supply," * by the Severns Valley Church, but only served (40) (43) there a short time. * We find Josiah Dodge ministering to the Church by the year 1791.* While preaching at Severns Valley (44) Church he was probably giving part of his time to a group on the Rolling Fork which he organized in 1788. Two other churches in Nelson County were probably under his care while he ministered at Rolling Fork, Cox Creek and Lick Creek.* (45)

Rev. Joshua Carmen He was the earliest and most ardent exponent of the anti-slavery sentiment in Kentucky. In 1796 he

The Slavery Status ~~16~~ 7

drew off from the churches he was serving, ~~the anti-slavery element~~, and about six miles north west of Bardstown organized an Emancipation Church. This was undoubtedly the first church in Kentucky to take definite stand on the slavery question.* (~~46~~ 11) Up till a year before this he had probbaly been in good standing with the Severns Valley Church as an entry of Jan. 25, 1795 reads as follows: " Brother Carmen is about to remove his residenve from the bounds of this church and requests a letter of dismission."* We do not hear from Carmen in Kentucky after the (~~47~~ 12) year 1796 when he induced the Rolling Fork Church to withdraw from the Salem Association. Because of his intense feeling on the slavery question he removed to Ohio where he was able to preach in a state where there was no issue on the question (~~48~~ 13) of slavery.*

This old pioneer undoubtedly exerted a great influence over the communties where he labored, and in each of his churches men were raised up to carry on the slavery agitation. Abraham Lincoln Sr. had probbably heard him preach near the Long Run home as early as 1783. Thomas Lincoln had undoubtedly heard him at Lick Creek and other Baptist Churches near the Washington County home. When he and Nancy moved to Elizabethtown in 1806 the influence of Joshua Carmen was still felt and especially among the group that worshipped on Nolin near the home where Abrahmm Lincoln was born.

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Other preachers whose names are connected with the Anti-Slavery movement and who did much to crystallize the sentiment in Kentucky were: Dodge, Hickman, Tarrant, Holmes, Barrow, Gregg, Smith etc. The two that preached that directly ~~undoubtedly~~ influenced the Lincolns more than any others were William Downs and David Elkin, ~~who~~ they were strong emancipators, ~~In these two characters have been discussed quite fully in the chapter on Religious Influences we will not present them again at this time.~~ and the boy Abraham ~~heard~~ heard both of them preach. They may have been the only influences outside of the Lincoln family that had a direct anti-slavery influence on Abraham Lincoln in Kentucky.

The Slavery Status 10 9

Church Activities

It was the church that not only started the agitation on the slavery question but it continued to follow it up with a consistant effort towards abolition.

The Rolling Fork Baptist Church was the organization to take the initiative in the slavery controversy. In 1789 it sent this query to the Salem Association, " Is it lawful for a member of Christ's Church to keep his fellow creatures in perpetual slavery." Because the Association refused to consider this question the ~~South Fork~~ Church withdrew. * The Rolling Fork Church was not more than five miles from the Knob Creek HOme of the Lincolns, and it might be said that they came to live in the very community which had registered the first objection in the state tothe church sanctioning slavery. It is needless to say that many of the Lincoln neighbors had been members of the organization when this drastic step was taken.

The Severns Valley Church, the oldest church still extant west of the Alleghanys, had been the seat of slavery controversy for nearly twenty years previous to the arrival of the Lincolns in Elizabethtown in 1806. It had been organized in 1781, and in the month of June 1787 there came to the church as a supply preacher Joseph Carmen. Carmen preached there about four years when on of his understudies in the church Josiah Dodge was ordained to the ministry and became the pastor. Carmen and Dodge were the leading emancipationists in the western poBtion of the state. They are credited with organizing the first Emancipation Church in the country at a point about six miles from Bardstown.*

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The Slavery Status 10

As early as Jan. 23, 1796 this question was up for discussion in the Severns Valley Church, " Quare, is slavery oppression or not? " the result of the debate is stated in these words, " The quare being taken up was answered in the affirmative , it was oppression." The following month another entry on the minute book suggests further agitation of the same question " Quare, can we as a Churhh have fellowship with those that hold the righteousness of perpetual slavery, it was answered iin the affirmative , they could not." Two months later the church tried to make such rules as would allow those already having slaves to retain them under certain conditions and also spoke with decision as to the attitude to be taken towards an unruly slave." On July 23, 1796 " Secer, a black man belonging to Bro. James Minihan is received by relation (to all the privileges of this church). The clause enclosed in brackets is crossed out. Several other slaves were received after this, and they were held to strict discipline.*

The South Fork Baptist Church, which served the next community into which the Lincolns moved , had been the seat of controversy, and another church had been formed known as Little Mount which was an " emancipation Church" of the Separate Baptist order, The records of the South Fork Church for the period between 1804 and 1840 are still extant and allow us to trace with accuracy the turmoil with in the church at this time on account of the black man in bondage.

The Slavery Status 1t

Two actions taken by the church in 1806 evidently stirred up agitation about the status of the negro. In June we find Brother David excluded from running away from his master." (31) In August two members of the church acknowledged " tying up a man and whipping him " (32) In November 1807 Brother Sam was excluded . (33) In December of the same year " Brother Whitman declared himself 'amansapater' and requested the church to know whether they would wish him to attend tham any longer or not." (34) We are advised as to the course the church took but on July 3,1808 fifteen members " went off from the church on account of slavery." (35) From this date until the first Saturday in July 1810 the church failed to transact any business. Brethren from the Nolin Church came over and tried to set the church in order. After one year on July 1811, the first business was transacted the only entries made in the interim stated that " the church met in peace."* (36)

It would appear from the records that the anti-slavery group were finally victorious because on Saturday, December 4, 1812 some of those who had withdrawn on account of slavery returned and were received back into the church.* (16) Among these was Jesse Friend who had married Polly Hanks, Aunt of Abraham Lincoln's mother.* At this same meeting Brother Whitman was requested to attend the next service. (38)

Within two years another disturbance occurs within the South Fork Church and this time a preacher by the name of William Downs seems to be the instigator of the trouble. He was an emanciptionist and belonged to the branch of the church called the separate order. Seven members now left the church and founded

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The Slavery Status 1512

an organization to which Downs minister~~ed~~ known as Little Mount Church.*

We are sure that the Lincolns had not affiliated with the South Fork Church the two years they lived at the birth place farm, as the church was in no condition to receive members. When they moved to Knob Creek they found themselves in another community in which the majority of the citizens belong~~ing~~ed to the Little Mount organization. This was the church which the emancipation group from South Fork had formed and this is the Kentucky church of which Thomas and Nancy Lincoln were members, we feel quite sure.

~~To review the findings of~~ After reviewing the attitude of these various churches towards ~~slavery is sufficient proof that if there was any question which~~ emancipation one is conversed Thomas Lincoln had heard discussed Pro and Con, ~~it was~~ the question of slavery. From every indication it was the one big ~~question~~ problem with which the church was wrestling at this period of Thomas Lincoln's residence in Hardin County, Kentucky. Whether or not he enjoyed this continual wrangling we may draw our own conclusion, ~~but~~ We find that many communities about that time did leave Kentucky to get rid of the constant controversy that was being waged over the question of slavery. We are rather inclined to believe when referring to the departure of his father for Indiana that Abraham Lincoln said that " the removal was partly on account of slavery", that he spoke the truth.

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~~The Departure from Kentucky 6~~

The Removal to a Free State

The year and the time of year of the Lincoln migration to Indiana is not only established by the words of Abraham Lincoln himself but also by many court documents bearing upon the closing events of the Lincoln's residence in Kentucky. The earliest date for the removal is sponsered by J. Edward Murr who claims that Abraham Lincoln was a child seven years and four months old when Indiana received him. * This would imply that the removal from Kentucky took place in the month of June 1816. This date is at least ~~four~~ five months too early. Thomas Lincoln was in Kentucky on ~~October 2nd. 1816 when he signed as bondsman on the marriage~~ Nov. 11, 1816 when he appears before a Justice of the Peace in Nelson County * bond of Caleb Hazel.* This ~~date~~ record we believe to be the last evidence of the ~~Kentucky residence of the~~ Lincoln Family in Kentucky.

The latest date which has been presented for the daparture of the Lincolns, is the month of November, 1817. ~~Austin Gollaher~~ Roger Gore is the informant here, and he is a whole year to late.* We are positive that the Lincolns left Kentucky at some date previous to Dec. 20, 1816. ~~A bill of attachment against Thomas Lincoln registers the fact that they had removed by that date.~~ as revealed by a public document. * An endorsment on one of the papers in the ~~ejectment~~ suit also affirms that "The Lincolns moved off the place in the fall of 1816." * ~~If futher evidence were necessary we might show from Indiana Records that the date Gollaher is alleged to have set is a year too late.~~ We are now able to conclude that the migration took place between November 11, 1816 and December 20 1816.

Gollaher also advised Mr. Brown in 1886 that" Thomas Lincoln moved from the Knob Creek neighborhood to some place which is now in Hardin County ...From there he moved to Indiana." *

Abraham Lincoln said that the removal tookplace in the autumn of 1816, Which would ~~refute both Murr and Gollaher and~~ Gore be in harmony with the court documents.

~~The Departure from Kentucky~~

The story of the migration is sometimes told in three parts: the prospecting trip, the river trip, and the overland trip.

——We have in the traditional river trip of Thomas Lincoln a sequel to the traditional sale of the Knob Creek Farm for ten barrels of whiskey. We can trace this stories back to Thayer who released it as early as 1863 * (24) we can find nothing to support them and much that contradicts the main features, Rewn we conclude in the chapter on the sale of the Knob Creek Farm for that there was no ten barrels of whiskey. If that be true , there was no need of a raft to transport it.

~~The fact that~~ Practically every Lincoln biographer who has followed Thayer has given the river trip wide publicity. It has diverged at several points, however, until one informant makes the cargo consist of deer and bear hams, buffalo, wax, wolf, coon, mink and beaver skins, gentian root, nuts, honey , peach brandy, whiskey, and jeans woven by his wife, and Sally Bush.* 25

All are agreed that Thomas had a shipwreck on the Ohio River and the amount of merchandise rescued depends upon the imagination of the narrator . Thayer says that but three barrels of whiskey was saved while Lamon says he recovered most of the whiskey. Although the writer has tried to find some single bit of evidence of this trip that could be relied upon he has thus far failed in the attempt.

The Overland Trip.

The trip by land from Kentucky to Indiana cannot be described in detail, either with reference to the route taken or to the type of conveyance used. Again the imagination of the biographer has been given full play, ~~in the Lincoln migration to Indiana.~~ Thayer asserts that ~~as all other belongings except bedding had gone on before~~ that they packed their belongings on ~~this on the backs of~~ his three horses.* (28) (31) Another biographer says that the backs of two borrowed horses carried their household effects.* (29) (33) Still another version pictures the conveyance ~~for this migration~~ as " a spring wagon to which the two old horses were hitched, " * remarking that " Mrs. Lincoln and Sarah were seated on a bed of straw in the front of the wagon. " * (30) (33)

We cannot believe that the Lincoln prairie schooner was different from the many others used at that time. The women probably rode on top of some of the household effects, while the men trudged along with the stock, which probably consisted of two extra horses and ~~four~~ two or ~~five~~ three head of cattle. Thomas Lincoln had listed for taxation that year four head of horses, and it is not likely that he would dispose of them when he was going still further west where there would be a greater demand for live stock.* (34)

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The Departure from Kentucky 1817

We can trace with some accuracy the first part of the route this caravan followed. The lincolns lived but a short distance from the junction of the Nolin-Bardstown road and the Elizabethtown-Springfield road. It was this latter road that they probably took enroute to Elizabethtown which would be their first stopping place. From here they would start out the road for which Thomas Lincoln himself had been a petitioner in the year 1803 * This road would take them near the Old Mill Creek home, and Thomas undoubtedly took this occasion to bid farewell to his sister Nancy and his mother, who were probably living near the old place. (32)

Their next stop would be Hardinsburg, an old town, and in a direct line to their destination. Through the courtesy of Mr. R.C. Ballard Thruston of Louisville, we are able to present a tradition which came to his hands on August 3, 1921. The informant was Mr. Logan C. Murray of New York, and a copy of the correspondence carrying this tradition follows:

August 3, 1921.

My dear R. Ballard Thruston:-

"Your letter reminding me of my engagement to give you an account of the passing of the Little seven year old Abraham Lincoln through Breckenridge County on the family's way to Indiana, . . . thence to Illinois and on to immortal fame was in the making for the little boy-- this is what I heard in June 1860.

" At the family supper table one evening in June, 1860, my father, Col. David R. Murray, sent Stanley, the colored waiter, to go to the dairy and ask Minerva, the colored woman, who was about the age of my father, to come to the dining room. She was a woman of remarkable mentality and brightness. My father said to her on her appearing in the dining room-- " Minerva, do you remember

The Departure from Kentucky 18

more than forty years ago that I was entering my house in the town of Hardinsburg, I talked to a poor family in the road and you were giving milk to a little boy on the door step. I enquired their name and where going--they were going to Indiana-" Minerva, after thinking it out; said" Yes, sir, I do. Their name was Linkhorn". " Yes," he said, " that is right as I remember it."

"Just where thi s family crossed the Ohio into Spencer County, Indiana, is never to be known perhaps, but they passed through Breckenridge County, Ky., saying their name was Linkhorn, and little Abraham Linkhorn drank milk on my father's door step fed by Minerva, prior to 1820.

" I remember perfectly that when my father told Minerva that that little boy she fed was Abraham Lincoln. who was nominated that day for President on the Republican ticket, she shouted " Good Lawd". In 1863 she sent her sons into the Union Army to help the boy she fed on his upward journey to be the great Emancipator.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Logan C. Murray." (26)

Ch 1 The Flower Stealers 19.

The Departure from Kentucky 12

From Hardinsburg the family would move on to Cloverport an old river town, ~~but the bend in the River just south of here which would be to their disadvantage on the Indiana side so probably they pursued~~ and then on to Hawesville, this would bring them to a point opposite Cannelton near Tell City. There is a possiblity that they may have crossed here. It is likely however, that they did not leave the Kentucky side until they reached the bank of the river opposite Troy at the mouth of Anderson Creek, when there was a ferry in operation. Here they would be at a point nearest their Indiana destination.

The entire distance traveled to the Indiana shore probably did not exceed seventy-five miles and sixteen miles more would place them on the site of their new home. ~~their new settlement~~. As late as 1816 the trails were fairly well established, and there was no difficulty in getting lodging along the way if the weather made it necessary for them to seek shelter. They should have been able to make the entire distance in five days at the most, ~~unless they found some difficulty in working back into the wilderness on the Indiana side of the Ohio.~~ A map published as early as 1797 shows a trail already to have been broken from the mouth of Anderson Creek through the Pigeon Creek neighborhood which ~~became their new home.~~ * was to be the home of Abraham Lincoln until he reached his majority. ~~a home in a free state when the states of the South rebelled not become an issue until this same land became a battle ground for freedom continuing to the present that all men are~~

Chapter Eighteen

The Slavery Status

Bibliographical Errata

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Tom Lincoln never exercised his rather sluggish brain much with the abhorance of slavery. Snider,page 37.

In New Orleans for the first time he (Abraham Lincoln) beheld the true horrors of human slavery. He saw "negroes in chains - whipped and scourged ". Herndon,page 75.

He(Jesse Head) held advanced notiona in both religion and politics and it was from that Thomas Lincoln is said to have imbibed mahy of his ideas on the slavery question.
Hitchcock.page59.

It has pleased some of Mr. Lincoln's biographers when referring to this removal(to Indiana) of his fathers , as a flight from slavery. Nothing could be further from the truth. There were not at the time more than fifty slaves in all Hardin County.
Lamon, page 37.

Reverend Jesse Head the minister who married Tom Lincoln and Nancy Hanks talked boldly against slavery, and Tom and Nancy Lincoln and Sarah Bush were just steeped full of Jesse Head's notions about the wrong of slavery and the rights of man as explained by Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine. Graham.
Barton, page 269

In all Hardin County -at that time a large area of teritory- there were not over fifty slaves,and it is doubtful if he saw enough slavery to fill him with the righteous opposition to the instution with which he has so frequently been credited. The assertion made by some of Mr.Lincoln's biographers,and so often repeated by sentimental writers,that his father left Kentucky to avoid the sight of,or contact with, slavery ,lacks confirmation.
Herndon page 19.

Linkhorn did not remove from Kentucky to fly from slavery and locate in a free state where toil was honorable, as narrated by the romancers,....besides there was not at that time fifty slaves in the county;his more fortunate relatives were slave owners and there is no reason in supposing that he differed in oppinion from other men of his class,of Southern birth. This story of his desire to escape from a land of slavery is of a peice with those fictions which describe theLinkhorn tumble down shanty,fourteen feet square in an Elizabethtown alley,where the inmates live in squallid poverty as a frugal Christian home ; the father a gallant frontiersman;and the mother a Roman Matron of the wilderness. Coleman,page 8.

SLAVERY

EXTRACTS FROM LINCOLN'S SPEECHES.

THIS declared indifference, but, as I must think, covert real zeal for the spread of slavery, I cannot but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world ; enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites ; causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity ; and especially because it forces so many good men amongst ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty—criticising the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest. [Lincoln to Douglas, at Peoria, October 16, 1854.]

Judge Douglas frequently, with bitter irony and sarcasm, paraphrases our argument by saying : " The white people of Nebraska are good enough to govern themselves, but they are not good enough to govern a few miserable negroes ! " Well, I doubt not that the people of Nebraska are, and will continue to be, as good as the average of people elsewhere. What I do say is, that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent. I say this is the leading principle—the sheet anchor—of American republicanism. Our Declaration of Independence says . . . " that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."—From the same.]

Now, I ask you, in all soberness, if all these things, if indulged in, if ratified, if confirmed and endorsed, if taught to our children and repeated to them, do not tend to rub out the sentiment of liberty in the country, and to transform this government into a government of some other form ? Those arguments that are made, that the inferior races are to be treated with as much allowance as they are capable of enjoying ; that as much is to be done for them as their condition will allow—what are these arguments ? They are the arguments that kings have made for enslaving the people in all ages of the world. . . I should like to know—taking this old Declaration of Independences which declares that all men are equal upon principle, and making exceptions to it—where will it stop ? If one man says it does not mean a negro, why may not another say it does not mean some other man ? If that declaration is not truth, let us get the statute-book in which we find it and tear it out ! Who is so bold as to do it ? If it is not true, let us tear it out !

Slavery

Herndon denies not until 1844 that Lincoln became anti slavery

Journal F961 .5

Slavery

"I never had an opinion on the subject, except in my love which I did not get from Henry Clay" Lincoln

Arnold 358

Slavery questions

negro girl named Nancy

Tazewell Circuit Court 1841

Lincoln lost 52 yrs of age

Subject of Slavery are legal questions

connected with a thorough study

Arnold 85

SLAVERY

Lincoln wrote a letter to Mary Speed in 1841 in whic may befound the following paragraph, a n incident on the boat between Louisville and st Louis; "A fine example was presented on board the boat for the contemplating the effect of condition on human happiness. A gentleman had purchased 12 negroes in different parts of Kentucky and was taking them to a farm in the south. They were chained six and six together, a small iron clevis was around the left wrist of each and this fastened to the main chain by a shorter at a convenient distance from the others. so that the negroes were strongtogether precisely like so many fish on a trot-line. In this condition they were being separated forever from the scenes of their childhood, their friends, thier fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters and many of them from their wives and children, and going into perpetual slavery, where the lash of the master is proverbially more ruthless than anywhere else.

Speed p 40